

Faith and Practice

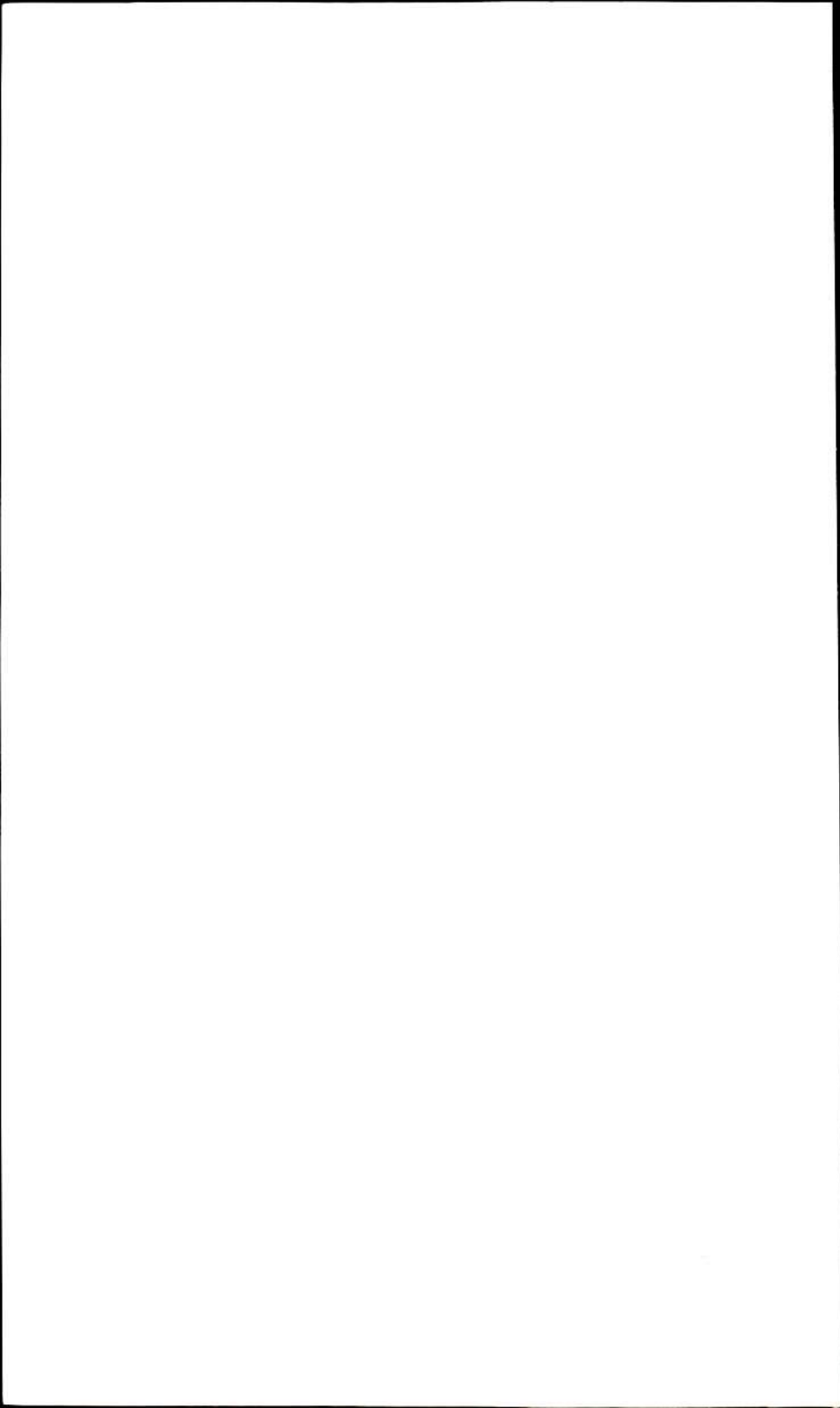
Liturgical Renewal in Chinese Churches

Samuel Sung-Him Ho
editor



LWF China Study Series Vol.4

March 1998



China Study Series Vol. 4

**Faith and Practice:
Liturgical Renewal
in Chinese Churches**

Edited by
Samuel Sung-Him Ho
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The Lutheran World Federation

1998

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Lutheran World Federation Preface

The Lutheran World Federation has had an interest in China, the Church in China and the Chinese churches since its very beginning. Already at its founding Assembly in Lund in 1947 a Chinese theologian and pastor was present, Rev. P'eng Fu.

In the years 1971-83 the LWF undertook a major study that became known as "The Marxism and China Study." The purpose was "to provide a forum through which the Lutheran churches together with others, can examine and evaluate the challenge of different forms of socialism (especially the Chinese) ... and what this challenge means for the mission of the church." In a subsequent document the objectives were defined: On the one hand to hear and understand what the new value systems and ways of life have to say to the church, on the other hand to understand what the Gospel has to say and how to express the Christian witness clearly and forcefully in new situations.

That is what we always are called to, so when the then General Secretary of the LWF, Dr. Gunnar Stalsett in 1992 reiterated a quest for a new China study his proposal was met with widespread approval. In his report to the

LWF Council coming together in Madras, he included the following paragraph:

Let me place before you a very specific and urgent point in this context. Having this year again visited the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, I am seized by the importance of 'everything Chinese' to the future of humanity. We are speaking about a fifth of the world's population, one of the most ancient cultures and religious-based value systems in the world. The major part of this Chinese community is under a social and political system which has failed in other parts of the world. Tiananmen Square and Tibet are names that continue to mobilize strong concerns for human rights. A worship service which I was privileged to attend in downtown Beijing with old and young worshipers, most of them with their Bible printed in China in their hands, gives cause to a nuanced assessment of the future of religious freedom. LWF conversations with government officials in China and Geneva over the past few years likewise give reasons for a cautious optimism about a place for the Christian church in this largest nation of the world . . .

The challenge of China today and tomorrow suggests a special study program for the period of 1994

to 1997 to be lodged in the Department for Theology and Studies and working integrally with the Department for Mission and Development, especially its Asia Desk and with the member churches. The China study carried out in the Studies Department during the years 1971-1983 might serve as a background, but its orientation must be more focused and church oriented. Given the post-denominational orientation of Christianity in the People's Republic of China and the distinct confessional identity of our Chinese member churches, it will be imperative that the ecumenical and confessional aspects of Christian presence and witness within the Chinese culture be taken seriously. (Agenda, Meeting of the LWF Council, 1992, Exhibit 8, paras. 110, 111)

This suggestion was referred to the Program Committee for the Department Theology and Studies which discussed it at some length and the Committee VOTED

that, in response to the General Secretary's suggestion for a "new China Program," the DTS staff be requested to undertake, in cooperation with the DMD and in consultation with the church in China and the Lutheran Chinese churches, a feasibility study on goals, content and method, and submit it to the next Program

Committee/Council meeting; (Proceedings of the LWF Program Committee for Theology and Studies, 1992, p.5).

This decision was endorsed by the council with the request that the program be developed in close cooperation with the church in China and the Lutheran Chinese churches. One of the goals of the study should be to enable the churches better to proclaim the Gospel.

Upon this recommendation a number of consultations and explorations were done with Chinese church leaders and Bishop K.H. Ting of the China Christian Council. The feasibility study showed the need for such a study and after further investigations the program finally was approved at the Council meeting in Kristiansand 1993 and a plan for its development was presented to the Council in Geneva in 1994.

The background for this positive reaction and interest in the church in China was formulated thus:

Already the demographic realities make it obvious that everything Chinese will be of importance in the years to come and that the impact of Chinese culture reaches far outside mainland China. This influence is also considerable within the churches. Seen from a

historical perspective the missionary concern for China has been high on the agenda. The church in China has been in the hearts and on the minds of many Christians and it has been remembered in many prayers, especially in times when Christians have been undergoing experiences not so very different from those of the early martyrs. Because of a certain inwardness of Chinese culture one could easily be led to bypass China. This would however be to the detriment of the rest of the world. Furthermore, there seems to be little doubt that with the financial and economic revival of the whole of South Asia China will gain in importance for the whole world.

In the churches in the Lutheran communion we must prepare ourselves for the importance of the reality of everything Chinese. So the world outside China is in need of information and communication. Here it is often mentioned that there is something to be learned from the history and struggle of the Chinese. Structures have developed and missiological methods have been used which need to be studied. This also goes for the specific Chinese spirituality and the many examples of inculturation which the history of Christianity in China and among the Chinese shows.

On the other hand there is for the church in China

and among the Chinese and among people and churches outside of China a need to reflect on the experiences of the church in China and the Chinese churches. It might not be possible in a study to grasp the soul of the church in China but there are lessons to be learned.

On May 17, 1994 the formal launching of the China Study program took place in Hong Kong at the Lutheran Theological Seminary. At this ceremony it was again stressed that there is much to be learned from studying the history of Christianity and the present development of the church in China. At this occasion I mentioned:

In this day and age it is not always easy for an international organization such as the LWF to take new initiatives. There are times when it seems to take all one's resources simply to keep going. Nevertheless one does know that if as an organization one does not renew oneself one will not live up to one's purpose. Thus the taking of a new initiative is to be seen as a sign of life and hope and to my mind the launching of the new program on China is precisely that: A sign of life and hope.

I am a member of the wider community of Lutheran churches who hopes to learn considerably from

this study. I am quite sure that I shall. Already the two years we have spent preparing the study have been most instructive. Amongst other things I have been taught modesty and humility in the face of the vastness of the subject and its potential importance.

The response to this study has been quite incredible. We in the Department for Theology and Studies are called to encourage and assist sound theological reflection in the member churches. Taking our confessional heritage as the point of departure we reflect on issues which challenge the present understanding of Christianity. Thus all our programs deal with the wider issue of gospel and culture. Hence the gospel and how it relates to the Chinese culture will be an integral part of this program.

Some of you may be aware of the fact that from 1971 to 1983 the Federation already conducted a China Study. This study gave rise to quite some controversy and I believe that so far there has not been a final analysis or evaluation of this program. The study just like any other project was very much a product of its time. During the period of isolation the study certainly helped stimulate interest in China and in what was going on in China. If today we look back at the project a number of questions need to be asked. This might in fact

give us a good starting point for our new venture.

Arne Sovik concludes his evaluation of the first China Study with the following words:

...General interest in China is concerned with its increasingly capitalist economy, the question of human rights and a certain unease about the future of the country. Will it evolve, as its wealth grows, into an aggressive national power in the Far East? Or will it be preoccupied with maintaining the unity of the nation by the force of a traditional nationalism combined with military power?

From the Christian point of view, interest in China is high, and the constantly changing scene raises many questions. Is the remarkable growth of the church in China, the reported interest even of some philosophical intellectuals in the Christian world-view evidence that the Gospel is finally rooted there? Can Christianity become, even if it remains a small minority, a significant element in the post-Maoist society? Will growth continue? Or does the desperate shortage of leadership and the ubiquity of heresy mean that the reality of Chinese Christianity is less impressive than the inflated numbers that are cited even by official sources? Will the future shatter the fragile unity that is based on eternal threats? Starting with these, questions abound.

Questions have been abounding. They have been

challenging us. With the China Study program we hope to provide some information that can help shed light on those questions.

The China Study Series is created to make the insights from the study available to a wider circle of interested people. It has from the beginning been the intention of the study program to reach out across confessional, regional and other borders. The program has from its outset been designed in an inclusive way. Therefore a group of consultants were formed in Hong Kong that could serve as a sounding board for the China Study committee and the research team. And from the beginning the program has been endorsed by the ecumenical partners, the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia.

Information is sometimes defined as the difference which makes a difference. By initiating this study the LWF hopes to make a difference, perhaps only that little difference which like the salt keeps the whole body safe and sound.

Viggo Mortensen

Director, Dr. theol.

Department for Theology and Studies

The Lutheran World Federation

November, 1996

China Study Program Preface

The LWF's interest in China and China Studies has already been clearly outlined in Professor Dr. Viggo Mortensen's very enlightening LWF Preface to the China Study Series (November, 1996). The genesis of the current China Study Program of LWF began in 1992 in the form of a request made by the former General Secretary, Dr. Gunnar Stalsett in his report to the LWF Council which met in Madras, India. Dr. Stalsett's emphasis on the importance of "everything Chinese" to the future of the world gained the strong support of the LWF leadership. The Program was approved by the Council in 1993 for an initial three-year period and was formally launched on May 17, 1994 at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong with four clearly stated purposes:

1. To increase the understanding of the situation of the Church in China.
2. To learn from the faith and experience of Christians in China.
3. To express solidarity with the Church and Christians in China.
4. To help prepare for the LWF Assembly in Hong Kong in July, 1997.

For logistics purposes the Program is located at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong with the Seminary's President, Dr. Lam Tak Ho as the coordinator. The

China Study Committee which accompanies the Program is chaired by Dr. Choong Chee Pang of Singapore. Prof. Dr. Viggo Mortensen, the Director of the Department for Theology and Studies of LWF oversees the whole Program. A Research Team, comprised mainly of LTS staff and a Research Secretary, Mr. William Mak Wing On, was also formed.

The first China Study Committee meeting, with the participation of some of its consultants, was held from May 16 to 18, 1994 in Hong Kong. The second committee meeting took place in Hangzhou, China, from June 4 to 6, 1995. The third meeting was held from March 7 to 10, 1997 in Hong Kong.

In spite of some initial difficulties, especially in the area of coordination and research, the Research Committee has so far managed to complete three very broad areas of studies: An Overview of Contemporary Chinese Churches (main contributor: Dr. Lee Chee Gong); Understanding The Lutheran Churches (main contributor: Dr. Andrew Hsiao), and The Situations of Women in the Church in China. The fourth area of studies was on the Role and Interpretation of the Bible in the Life of the Church in China. The results of all four areas of studies have been published.

The LWF Council, at its meeting in September/October 1996, decided to extend the China Study Program for an additional three years to the year 2000. We take this decision

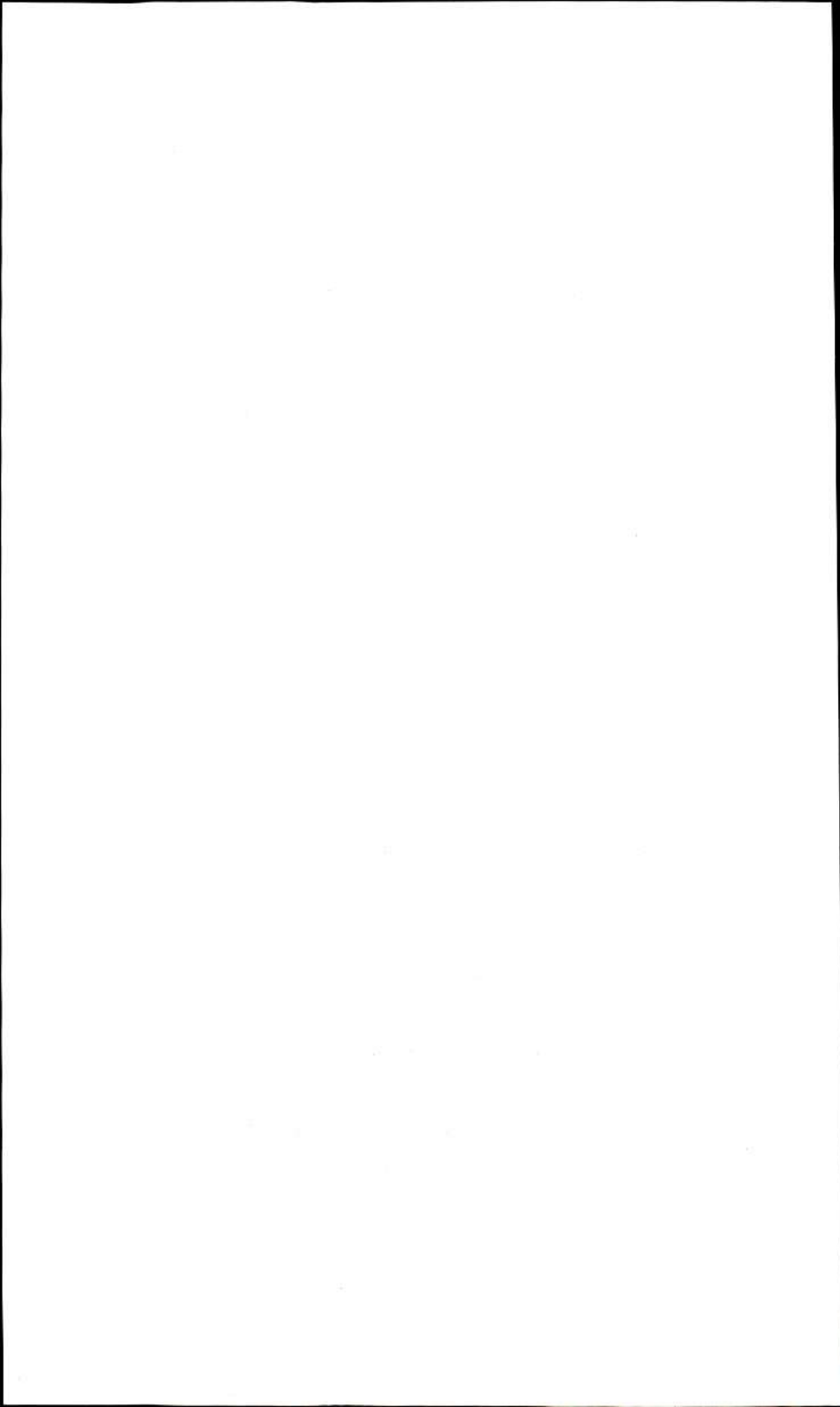
as a strong endorsement of the importance of the Program as we move forward, by the grace of God, to the next century—the dawn of a new millennium!

The Ninth Assembly of the LWF was held in Hong Kong from 8 to 16 of July, 1997 when the China Study Series were distributed to all participants and met with warm reception.

The second period of the China Study Program formally began with a meeting of the China Study Committee in Hong Kong, March 6 to 8, 1998. Besides making plans for studies for the next three years the Committee also held a well attended one day seminary on Faith and Practice in the Chinese Churches. We would like to express our grateful thanks to Dr. Samuel Sung-Him Ho, a General Director of the China Study Program for organizing the seminar and for putting together the seminar paper for the present publication.

It is hoped that papers for future seminars on topics such as "Christian Responsibility in the Changing Chinese Society", "Chinese Literature on Christianity by non-Christians" etc., will also be published accordingly.

Prof. Dr. Choong Chee Pang
LWF China Study Committee
Easter, 1998



Editor's Note

We cannot understand a church without knowing her faith and practice. Worship is the source and embodiment of our common belief. We believe that sacramental symbols provide a public matrix of social meaning for the individual; i.e., for public thought and for personal hope. The liturgy announces who we are and who we are to become in Christ.

Liturgy is the basis upon which we construct our theologies of God, human beings, church, and salvation. Liturgical reformation is necessary. In a post-modern age, we need not only the theological liturgical differences resolved in a post-denominational church, but also need to study different ritual practices in other religious traditions.

"The liturgy is the bodily form of dogma, and dogma is the soul of the liturgy." The liturgy itself is primarily theology. It is the communal meaning of the liturgy exercised by the gathering itself. The assembly uses combinations of words and signs to speak of the Transcendental. In this anthology, the following questions are examined:

1. How are the theological and liturgical differences

resolved in a post-denominational church?

2. How do the ritual-symbolic interactions propose to people, living in the culture of consumerism and pluralism, a realistic pattern for interpreting our world, for containing their actual experience, and for enabling action and hope? To what extent has the Christian faith been contextualized?
3. How is the Two-Society principle reflected in the church structure and the church-state relationship?
4. How are the worship and communal life of believers?
5. How does the assembly say something authentic and reliable about God, and say something true about ourselves and about our world as they are understood before God?

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Summer, 1998 Hong Kong

Chapter 1

Towards the Richness of Symbolic Language & Liturgical Renewal in Light of David Power's & Mary Collins' Liturgical Methodology

Samuel Sung-Him HO (何崇謙)

1. Introduction

Behavioral scientists tell us that changes in the technical and social structure bring concomitant changes in the symbolic structure. Accordingly, worldwide communications will shape some social consensus regarding transcendental values such as freedom, conscience, sex, guilt, death, and love, subjects found and treated in every culture, every religion, and every period of history, even if under distinctive images. We see twentieth-century theology as the story of theology's struggle along with culture through this transition from modernity to post-modernity. We are living in a time of political and cultural crisis. The crisis of our time runs too

deep to be studied only through academic discipline, but attention should be paid to a considerable number of recent intellectual currents on the interpretation of theology and culture.

Church renewal relates closely with sound liturgical theology that does not preclude the cultural influences in which the whole congregation lives. Culture, in the sense of the life-style of a particular society, becomes describable and definable because of its association with the whole concept of social order. Among the liturgical theologians, David Power sees the church's problem as being a misreading of the symbolic nature of sacraments, due to a failure to see the changes in society, which gives symbols their meaning. He advocates that Christian symbols can be recovered and restored to their proper authenticity, but only after a rigorous reappraisal of them in the light of history, anthropology and philosophy.

In this paper, I will explore the relation between symbolic language and liturgical theology so as to understand how to establish the liturgical life of a local church that can adapt the continuous changes of society and truly reflect the Christian way of being-in-the world. I will study David Power's methodology and content of his liturgical theology and consult Mary Collins' practical theology of liturgy as supplementary.

2. Power's methodology and Emphasis

Power's book, *Understanding Riches: The Symbolic Nature of Liturgy*, is indicated to have two goals. The first one is to relate studies on symbolism and its modes to an understanding of liturgy. The second one is to relate these studies to the renewal of liturgy in a time of crisis, both liturgical crisis and socio-political crisis.

Striving to redeem the use of symbols in liturgy or to urge the development of the symbolic elements in worship, Power takes five steps to construct his thesis. The first step is to appeal to the scholars who concluded that Western society has been in a crisis of spirituality and that the reasons are attributed to the breakdown of the symbolic system. These scholars are sharing the same vision, i.e., advocating to redeem artistic mentality in our culture. For these scholars, the artists are gifted to create works that bring the world of feelings and of challenge new perceptions of reality. For example, Susanne Langer advocates picking up all senses of beauty and creative power¹. Joseph Campbell encourages us towards personal freedom and inner sense of meaning—inferiority. James Joyce strives to search for new worlds and power of creativity². Terence Brown expresses his sense of identity in terms of artistic expression. Clifford Geertz portrays the world through the coherent cultural symbols³. All the

suggestions and insights aim to help us realize the fact that we are living in a crisis of hope and vision, as well as in a liturgical crisis.

Church leaders have to be aware that they have been wrong in requiring uniformity in their ministries and in their insensitivity to issues of cultures and to the pluralism of religious expression. To diagnose the liturgical unbalance and the cultural crisis of the contemporary world, Power points out that the studies of the orientations of those scholars could foster our symbolic heritage in liturgy. Power maintains, "A symbolic system which confines and minimizes individual freedom and thought is no more acceptable in religion than in other fields."⁴ After elucidating the problem of our age, Power criticizes the traditional hierarchical system both in our society and our church. He pinpoints the weakness of the hierarchical system by exposing its powerlessness to identify between God and the ecclesial-soical institution, between God's kingdom and the church, or between the kingdom and Christendom.

The second step is to appeal to historical study to see how the symbolic has been lived and explained in the past so that by reviewing what has been learnt we learn something new. The research exposes at least two trends of development in ecclesial history. First, in early Christian

period, when Christianity was in low social status, the focus was the issue of appropriateness and desacralization. How Christian worship selected a symbol, what was detrimental to the Christian belief, and what pagan elements were discarded, desacralized, so that the central doctrine such as death and resurrection of Jesus would not be diminished by the gross pagan teachings, and at the same time how it can be easily assimilated in the world concept?

Second, in later period, when Christianity enjoyed esteemed social influences, the issue was desacralization. How could Christian festival and sacrament present different images for seasons of the calendar and of human life form the pagan world? Just as Mary Collins observes, "Insofar as it is celebration of the mystery of Christ as that mystery has been culturally perceived and appropriated, the liturgical event will reflect cultural selectivity in its very celebration."⁵

The third step is to lead the readers to understand the use of symbols and their effect on human experiences so as to explore the relation of symbolic studies to an understanding of liturgy. Inspired by Langer's symbolic language, Power sets up a threefold classification of signs: signals, discursive symbols, and presentational symbols. Signals are things like smoke, "which says simply that

something else lurks in the vicinity."⁶ Discursive symbols are the language of science and philosophy, sharply defining and discriminating among the things symbolized. They "divide in order to conquer."⁷ Presentational symbols are poetic, multivalent, ploy-semantic. Sacraments thus are presentational symbols. Power makes a suggestive distinction between symbolic and allegorical interpretation of the Mass. He states that "in a properly symbolic context the second or symbolic meaning is given in the first...Breaking bread is an action of dividing and sharing which is done in a memorial of Christ's death reveals some part of its meaning."⁸ Allegory, on the contrary, assigns meanings artificially and arbitrarily to words and acts. The allegories of the Medieval renditions have had detrimental influences on the understanding of liturgy ever since, particularly at a popular level.

The most important question is to ask whether the holy is best encountered today through the symbols of hierophany or through the symbol of word. Power insists that the choice of one approach rather than the other has important consequences for worship. Although he is generally careful to retain good balance to both sides of the argument, he says:

On the one side, importance is given to word and

to the church's ability in a poetic of word to express the contemporary encounter with Christ. This viewpoint carries a sense of time and history which is teleological or eschatological which looks to the future for the utopia of God's kingdom and celebrates this hope in liturgy.⁹

The linguistic understanding and reality is stressed in Power's liturgical transformation. Thus Power further develops a survey of myth, narrative and metaphor and their application to liturgy.

The fourth step is to use various kinds of "rudimentary languages" such as metaphor, metonymy, historical master images to enrich the symbolic meanings of Christian liturgy, then to amplify that liturgy is not simply a word, "[but] is an act for which symbolic languages is the necessary medium, an act of faith and celebration on the part of the church, and an act of God by which the church is transformed in grace."¹⁰ Instead of exploring the theological meaning of the relationship between divinity and humanity as the traditional theologians did, Power turns his attention to the symbolic structure and language of the celebration of liturgy itself so as to understand its nature as action of God and of the Church simultaneously.

The symbolic modes of expression of the celebration

in liturgy includes body language, key words that relate to key experiences of a people, narrative or storytelling, and the modes of address that flow from these. While this is a universal statement, it is one that immediately pleads for liturgical diversification, since these symbolic modes are quite distinct from one culture to another.¹¹ For example, "shared table" is the key of the Lord's Supper, "purification and rebirth" are root-images in baptism. Both are symbols used to refer to the more basic human experience that is integrated into the Christian, as well as to its meaning in the church.¹² Therefore, for Power "the intention of the prayers is always symbolic rather than legal."¹³ Here symbolic means that the symbolic has been described as the transformation of experience and the bringing of experience to formal experience so that it may be understood and given new projection with new vital possibilities of being and action.

We have to note that symbolic interpretation is different from arbitrary allegorical interpretation in that the latter assigns meanings artificially and arbitrarily to words and acts. For example, "when the priest washes his hands after the presentation of gifts in the Mass, the people may be told that this represents Pilate."¹⁴ Power is acutely critical of the development, which has been perhaps more firmly lodged in Roman Catholic practice. Power asserts

that liturgy, *sacramentum* or *leitourgia*, covers the entire range of liturgical celebration. Therefore he is chiefly concerned with the symbolism of the whole biblical narrative.

Since the greatest difficulty in symbolic interpretation lies in the symbol's opaqueness, Power strives to solve the problem by the fifth step that is to treat an ontology of symbol as transformation in four modes: a. from objects to meaning; b. from utilitarianism to values; c. from external to inner world; d. from image to imaginative. These movements require three significance criteria for substantiate sacramental practices: fullness of language, adequacy to experience, and orthopraxis. The four modes and the three criteria are based on the following principle:

[Liturgy] should profess to worship God in a way whose foundation is laid by the apostolic tradition, and it professes to allow communities in all times and in all places to acknowledge the one Redeemer and the one God. This common meaning across time and space can be mediated only by an interpretation which incorporate a dialectic between particular traditions and between diverse forms of expression.¹⁵

Here the important concern is stressed: the relation

between the symbols and the transcendental one, or the relation between the world opened by liturgical symbols and the world of revelatory words of God.

3. Collins' Methodology and Emphasis

Mary Collins considers that one could study liturgy from many different angles, because liturgical rites, like all ritual activity, are relational liturgy and occur in "sacred space" defined by a community. Further, liturgical activity is symbolic activity, which depends on a repertoire of verbal and non-verbal symbols to express God's way of saving the world in Jesus Christ. Therefore, liturgy can be studied historically, anthropologically, sociological, linguistically, legally, dramatically, architecturally, psychologically, and theologically.

For Collins, as for Power, the symbolic language of religion encompasses and receives multiple points of reference, multiple connotations with a single form, word or phase; that is "polysemy", a favorite term of Power. Collins reminds us that unless we know the characteristic of Christian liturgy and refashion the research skill to be able to follow an ecclesiastical mandate and massive cultural changes, only then could we really dig into this discipline and get its essence.

Unlike Power, Collins pays more attention to liturgy

of the local church because she found that local church practice has more flexibility to adjust the cultural forms of this era. She points out:

The problem for contemporary liturgical studies is, then, to find appropriate and effective ways for interpreting and evaluating those indigenous liturgical changes generated by the living faith of the local churches in touch with their own experience of the paschal mystery and with the living tradition of Catholic liturgy as well as their own cultural experience. The concern is to find ways of uncovering what is happening in these events and why; what religious understanding is being heightened and what discarded in the ritualizing activity. What is the doctrinal and ecclesiological content of the indigenous forms? ¹⁶

The area Collins is concerned with lies mainly in the relation between the indigenous forms and religious experience in a particular historical context.¹⁷

Like Power's concern with structural analysis, but different from his artistic orientation, Collins adopts approaches of the socio-anthropologist structuralism from Victor Turner to investigate analytic method so as to encourage the process of Christian enculturation and

liturgical renewal. Victor Turner tilts towards situational analysis by dealing with ritual meanings and the way in which the ritual effects its intent through the use of multivocal, condensed or "massive" symbols, both rudimentary and auxiliary. Turner's three analytic tools inspire us to cope with the current liturgical situation:

- a. The concept of *Social drama* as a key to social reality teaches us to view the ecclesiastic institution as a human cultural system.
- b. The concept of *Processual view of society* helps us to realize that society is a process rather than a timeless entity.
- c. The concept of *Ritual symbols* urges us to concede their richness in multivocal meaning, their power of unifying disparate referents, and their adhesive force to bridge emotional value and moral norms.

For Collins, liturgy is not only a didactic endeavor toward edifying belief, it is also an unified event in which the church expresses the love, faith, and hope that is in them. Therefore, liturgical renewal should be drawing on the laity to act out the faith of the church.

Aiming to establish foundations for future liturgical research, Collins extracts some major ideas from four celebrated theorists: Suzanne Langer, Clifford Geertz, Gregory Bateson, and Ronald Grimes; the last two scholars whom Power did not select also will be mentioned here. Grimes advocates to retrieve bodiless activity in ritual

gathering that gives rise to a fresh stimulation of exploration of bodily styles in Christian public worship. Grimes points out that bodily orality characterizes Christian practices in which eating, drinking and proclamation become the contact points with the divine. For Collins, Grimes' elaboration of Christian bodily symbols heightens the meanings already expressed in the irreducible bodily mode at the core of the ritual tradition. Bateson's stress on relationship, both vertical and horizontal, in liturgical activity favors the use of presentational forms, because their character of multiplicity and redundancy do not easily distort the unconscious knowledge of relationship and could stimulate creative imagination, that would lead to the transformation of liturgical rites.

Collins is very much concerned with how ritual activity can be better adopted in the church with fresh theological connotation. On this matter, Collins urges us to note that "universal" ritual is always local and contemporary in performance, because "ritual acts are fundamental tradition. But they are always the actions of some particular people gathered in a particular place and time who use the available ritual forms for their own purposes."¹⁸ In addition, Collins points out that ritual studies may have regressed today because of the cultural-

religious bias that split mind and body.¹⁹ For Collins, liturgy provides space, time, and atmosphere for the believing community to engage themselves, to experience transcendence, and to express that experience in action. Sacramental action is Christian liturgy.

The choice of words in liturgy is significance in Collins' own idea of constructing contemporary sacramental theology. The issue of androcentric image of God and the egalitarian struggle to overcome the discrimination of racism become Collins' persistent task in her liturgical studies. In brief, for Collins, the liturgy expresses the faith of the church. It is a faith that has trinitarian and christological, pneumatological and anthropological (feminist), ecclesiological and eschatological components.

4. Theological Model

Power explicitly states that a liturgical model he strives to develop for the interpretation of the liturgy is twofold: transformative and ontological.²⁰ For Power, both transformation of humanity and realization of the meaning of God's presence characterize his model. He offers three complementary angles on liturgical crisis within a large circle of social crisis: as a crisis of social symbols overtaken by cultural changes; as a discrepancy between a

hierarchical paradigm preserved in the church's liturgy and an experience of reality in historical terms; and as a crisis derived in part from the clash between what are identified as organist and mechanistic paradigms in contemporary culture. The result is a crisis of vision and a crisis of hope, in which the liturgy fails to enunciate a relevant Christian vision for our era and to render the kind of hope that people confide to hold fast and live by. In brief, for Power the gaits of the churches are awkward because they are unable to walk compatibly with the rhythm of the epoch-pace.

According to James Empereur's seven-models of liturgical theology, Power's approach can be classified in-between three sibling models: the process model, the therapeutic model and the liberation model. It matches the process model, because Power's agreement with Susanne Langer's insight that "church leaders had abandoned all sense of beauty in religious expression and in the environment of religious ritual."²¹ His advocacy of artist mentality to "re-create [liturgical] tradition in aesthetic forms means that one is gifted with inferiority, with personal freedom and creative power, and with the ability to perceive a human society in tune with nature and the cosmos."²² This fits the concept of process that God is working in and through the world toward greater union, and the lines between church and word and Christ and

humanity are blurred.²³ No wonder Power prefers to use Aristolian modal *mythos* and *mimesis* as the threshold to explain divine revelation and history; because in Aristolian modal myth and traditional narrative are used almost interchangeably: a particular signifies the universal.²⁴

It corresponds the therapeutic modal because Power's idea of self-making or humanity formation in the liturgy reveals the same therapeutic perspective in that God is most fully and clearly met in human interaction and experiences.²⁵ In such model, where the immanence of God is stressed,²⁶ the liturgy is considered as a help in reading our history and the history of a community as a place where salvation is taking place. Power's transformation model also partly agrees with the liberation model that explains that all authentic worship must be contextualized by reform of sinful structures and a ministry to the oppressed. At this point Power points out that sacraments like signs unite the past which they commemorate, the future toward which they point, and the present wherein they signify the operation of divine grace.²⁷ Power offers three criteria for evaluating the truthfulness of sacramental celebration in the light of the approach to sacraments developed in the body of the book. The three criteria are "the fullness of language, adequacy to experience and celebration's relation to the orthopraxis of gospel freedom and solidarity with

the suffering."²⁸ He goes on to point out:

In a period of liturgical crisis, it is important for the whole church to look to the contrast experience provided by those communities that live the struggle for freedom in faith and hope. The orthodoxy of the sacramental canon is verified or authenticated by the orthopraxis of solidarity with victims and of hope in suffering.²⁹

The liturgy will present a strong prophetic vision and become a place of witness to the oppressed. Although this model "carries a sense of time and history which is teleological or eschatological,"³⁰ the liberation spirituality is very much a this-worldly experience.

In George Lindbeck's theological category, Power's model attributes to his "cultural-linguistic alternative." Lindbeck says:

[R]eligions are seen as comprehensive interpretive schemes, usually embodied in mythos or narratives and heavily ritualized, which structure human experience and understanding self and world...[T]he linguistic-cultural model is part of an outlook that stresses the degree to which human experience is shaped, molded, and in a sense constituted by cultural and

linguistic form. These are numberless thoughts we cannot think, sentiments we cannot have, and realities we cannot perceive unless we learn to use the appropriate symbol systems.³¹

Power underscores the knowledge of the world of the symbol, for he thinks that it "deploys the multiple possibilities of meaning,"³² and enriches the sacramental participation by using symbolic hermeneutics in the liturgy.³³ He simply views that liturgy is art which is also a kind of language, and asks for an understanding of symbol in terms of "use" rather than an ontological distinction between sign and symbol. From the six points³⁴ that Power uses to elucidate that the metaphor is key to liturgical symbolism, we learn that Christian symbols are determined by a historical revelation, which hinges largely on verbal images.

In Hans Frei's five-type theological division, Power's transformation model matches a fifth type. This type of theological approach tells us that theology is strictly inside talk, although whether it is possible to identify it as first-or second-order talk. Thus, theology is internal to the religion itself. As D.Z. Phillips, a distinctive representative of this type, says, "The foundations of a theological system is based on the non-formalized theology which is within

the religious way of life carried on by the person who is constructing a theological system."³⁵

In the light of David Fagerberg's four understandings, Power's liturgical endeavor could be marked as a combination of essence of 2nd, 3rd and 4th approaches, however, it is closely tied to the 3rd one. Fagerberg's four approaches are: a. theology of worship—worship is just a branch in theology; b. theology from worship—doing theology from the perspective of worship; c. liturgical theology—liturgical action is theological act; d. the study of the third approach (liturgical theology). For Fagerberg, theology is influenced by liturgy, but *leitourgia* establishes theology because the grammar of *lex orandi* precedes normatively the *lex credendi* of the community and individual. Liturgy capacitates (Fagerberg's favorite word) theologians, including liturgical theologians. He says:

Theology is grammar, and the liturgy is theology in ritual grammar. Liturgical theology fundamentally conceived is the community's adjustment to God's grammar, preserved and passed on in the structure of the assembly's rites; liturgical theology derivatively conceived is when someone enunciates this grammar by having examined the historical rites.³⁶

For Fagerberg, ritual grammar is prayer. *Leitourgia* means to put on Christ." It also means an action or a function of ministry of a person or a group on behalf of and in the interest of the whole community. Therefore, it is not the case that the priest does a liturgy for the church, rather the Church does its liturgy for the world³⁷, which Power endeavors to tell the church.

5. Whether the Holy is best encountered through the symbols of hierophany or through the Symbol of Word

The key question in Power's liturgical theology is that: Is the core of Christianity content and form—doctrine and ritual, or is it particular dynamics of religious experience—a dynamics of faith, which constitutes the human experience of the transcendent?³⁸ Power seems to choose the second one, that is, a dynamics of religious meaning that structures the transcendent experience. In viewing so, we must have principles of action to guide its expression and its relation to diverse symbolic forms in other religions and cultures. Thereafter, for Power, the logos character of the liturgy is significant in conveying the grace of God and in pointing the direction. Power analyzes:

Hierophany as a mode of sacred revelation attaches primordial importance to the nonverbal, to sacred places and times, to sacred representations, to things infused with sacred power, to the iconic and the visually aesthetic. ...Revelation is believed to have its singularity in discourse rather than in the numinous suggested by holy places, times, things, and actions... Word in its various forms, such as narrative, myth, parable, prophecy, and proverb, is held better able to signify the nonidentity of the divine with its manifestations. The paradoxes of word and the iconoclasm of word are said to enter into dialectic with hierophany.³⁹

What Power means by "word" is presentational symbols, in which reality is beyond a world of images and sense perceptions. In this sense, Power considers that a logomimetic approach or the linguistic way is the most helpful for understanding the liturgy's symbolic nature. Liturgy has logic character, but not necessarily in discursive mood.

Power holds that symbols enrich life and make it human. But he points out that symbols have their opaqueness that would impede us to understand what they mean in liturgical setting. Because of their inscrutability, we need a mediator to open up the symbolic expression of

diverse cultures to an appropriation of the gospel truth. This mediator is theological reflection, both critical and expository so as to eliminate the divergence fostered by Western mentality which stresses the productivity and organization. Therefore, three sign qualities are noted: a. flexibility of symbols that could allow space for nonidentity of God and negation of the Word so as to prevent absolute explanation; b. emotional tangibility of symbols that could maintain the immanence of God in creation; c. participatory quality of symbol that could avoid all univocality.

In studying the ontology of symbols, Power raises two questions that need to be addressed to relate to the perception of reality: a. How can we explain symbol's relation to the transcendent? Or what is their place in the human community's aspiration to the transcendent? b. Can we speak of the world of Christian symbolism as a revelation of being? Or what is the explanation of the world and the divine which is disclosed in the liturgy? How could a material instrument, such as bread, or rice, produce a spiritual effect?

In solving the above questions, Power points out, as Kant asserts, that categories of transcendental understanding were simply given to human beings as part of their birthright. Here Power calls this birthright "mythopoetic core of human person"⁴⁰ by which a divine

self-communication is constituted. In addition, Power shows that liturgy can be viewed as the occasion on which God conferred grace. For him, sacraments as signs have a threefold signification, namely, commemorative, representative, and prognostic, which is all-embracing the whole history of each individual. No wonder, for Power, the liturgy runs the gamut between a schema of exteriority and inferiority.⁴¹ Power suggests, "Religious symbolism, in pointing to the transcendent and to ultimate meaning, offers the point of unity where all things are consummated."⁴²

The awareness of "otherness" could be obtained through liturgical symbols, says Power, and could fulfill the human person's quest for the other in a total self-renunciation. This awareness of orderness is generated through the sensorial, the ritual action, the verbal images, the mythos, and the doxology. These act upon one another so that together they bring about the fourfold transformation: a. facts to meaning; b. utility to value; c. outer to inner; d. image to imaginative; because the human person does not know and possess the self except through the other of symbolic manifestation, and it is only in this way that the person is truly constituted as such.

6. Conclusion

I think that the reason why Power stresses the

"verbal" images in liturgy is that only the diverse quality of the word of God can both keep the many-facetedness of the liturgical symbols and maintain their communal character to bind and to relate to a believer's religious experience.

Symbols present the reality they symbolize. They are not confined to one meaning but are, rather, a bundle of meanings. The symbolism adds a new value to an object or an activity without denying its other dimensions. Bread⁴³ (or rice in most Southeastern Asian countries), for instance, can be life giving and joy fulfilling. To try to limit a symbol rigidly to one absolute meaning is to do worse than to mutilate it. Susan Langer suggested that it is a basic and pervasive human need to symbolize, to invent meaning, and to invest meanings in one's world. It was a property of the human mind to search for and to find significance everywhere, to transform experience constantly to uncover new meanings.

Why, and how, is a symbolic study of culture suited for constructing liturgical theologies? First of all, its interdisciplinary approach and its "responsibilities" for all dimensions of culture, both verbal and nonverbal, with empirical and non-empirical, represent the kind of holism that is important when it comes to listening to a culture. It allows all knowledge to be seen as interlocking and

interdependent. In so doing, it lessens the risk of reductionism and determinism. However, in all cases, the symbols or the signs given to the eye or to the ear are designed to bring about some appropriate form of behavior in an appropriate situation and at an appropriate time, with which Collins is mostly concerned. In other words, a symbol, as we think of it today, is usually practical in its purpose. As R.M. MacIver said, "The symbol is at once a definite focus of interest, a means of communication and a common ground of understanding...All communication, whether through language or other means makes use of symbols. Society (including church community) could scarcely exist without them."⁴⁴

Power's main purpose is to use "symbol" as instruments to "quip" and to "help" the church capable of using them to grasp a vision of reality. He discovers that the churches overall not only lack imaginative ability to see beyond the outward, but to break through the confinement of the inner vision. Power views liturgy as an art that is a language. A symbol is a thing that carries a meaning, and as such it exists to be understood to impart information whether conceptual or factual. If a work of art, liturgy, is a symbolic language, then its value is either cognitive or practical and its purpose is to carry information. Would this definition be too narrow to

understand the nature of liturgy? Where is the transcendental dimension in liturgy?

From Power's and Collins' analysis of nature of liturgy, we learn that theology should not be just a kind of specific creation of the mind, nor a mental attitude, but it should listen to the culture and to the church tradition in a fresh and open perspective. A traditional ritual may give the wrong message, and so an adaptation needs to take place. Power and Collins urge us to pay more attention to the cultural texts or contexts in order to reflect our idea of liturgical theology. Their liturgical theology can be defined as the dynamic interaction among gospel, tradition, church and culture.

A grasp of the interaction among gospel, tradition, experience and symbols is important in understanding human existence in general; it is even more so in the understanding of Christian liturgy. To let the symbols or sacraments express, we must first appreciate how they express. The study of Power's and Collins' liturgical content renders at least two principal tasks of theology: to express the identity of a believing community, and to help people dealing with the dynamics of social changes that come upon the community.

Notes

- ¹ David Power, *Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic Nature of Liturgy*, (New York: Pueblo, 1984), p.8.
- ² *Ibid.*, p.9.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p.12.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p.16.
- ⁵ Mary Collins, *Worship: Renewal to Practice*, (Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1987), p.118.
- ⁶ David Power, *Ibid.*, p.68.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p.69.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p.66.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p.78.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.144.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.114, 146.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p.147.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p.151.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.177.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.174.
- ¹⁶ Mary Collins, *Worship: Renewal to Practice*, (Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1987), pp.62-3.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.97-9; 104-5.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.97.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.113.
- ²⁰ David Power, p.3,4.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p.8.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ James Empereur, *Models of Liturgical Theology*, (Nottingham: Grove Books, 1987), p.31.

- ²⁴ David Power, *Unresearchable Riches*, p.118.
- ²⁵ Empereur, p.35.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.38.
- ²⁷ David Power, *Unresearchable Riches*, p.181.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.213.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.216.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.78.
- ³¹ George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), p.34.
- ³² David Power, *Unsearchable Riches*, p.64.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p.60.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.135-39.
- ³⁵ Hans W. Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, ed. by George Hunsinger & William Placher, (New Haven: Yale University, 1992), p.48.
- ³⁶ David W. Fagerberg, *What is Liturgical Theology: A Study in Methodology*, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), pp.210-11.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.155.
- ³⁸ David Power, "Cultural Encounter and Religious Expression," *Liturgy and Cultural Religious Traditions*, ed., by Herman Schmide & D. Power, (New York: Crossroad, 1977), p.104.
- ³⁹ David Power, *Unsearchable Riches*, p.76.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.184.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, pp.102-3, 113.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.188.
- ⁴⁴ R.M. MacIver, *Society*, (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p.340.

Chapter 2

A Response to:

Towards the Richness of Symbolic Language &
Liturgical Renewal in Light of David Power's &
Mary Collins' Liturgical Methodology

Andrew Wai Man NG (伍渭文)

Dr. Ho's paper introduces to us the recent studies of symbols especially the studies of David Power and Mary Collins. In the survey of these writers, Dr. Ho concurs with David Power's contention that changes in society provide symbols their meaning. If the church fails to recognize such changes, the church fails to establish an authentic liturgical life and not able to be a church truly being-in-the-world. David Power specifically cites the example of the hierarchical system, insensitive to the social changes, becomes a very weak symbol. The hierarchical system fails to identify between God and ecclesial-social institution, or between God's kingdom and church, or between kingdom and Christendom. Collins stresses liturgy as an expression of the living faith of the faithful, and as such cultural

context of the faithful should be seriously taken into consideration. Liturgy is not only didactic for edification of the saints. Liturgy is also a corporate expression of the living love, faith, and hope of the faithful.

I concur with Collins. Liturgy is both impression and expression. It is didactic because worship is intelligent worship (Jn 4:22). The gospel and salvation history set the movement of liturgy. We come to the Father as redeemed children of God. With childlike joy we come to the lost paradise redeemed. Thus preaching is one of the highlights in the liturgical movement in that the law and gospel confront the *simul justus et peccator*. However, didactic calls for an effective communication. Without due regard for the social and cultural context of our audience, we cannot communicate effectively. As Phillip Brooks contends in his Yale lectures, preaching is communication of truth by man to man. In Hong Kong, Christians can witness the political and social changes in many symbols. Mailboxes are now painted green, instead of red under the British rule. When we rise to applause dignitaries, we clap our hands differently. The Buddha Statue in Lantau Island becomes the symbol for Tourist Association and it appears on the Television Screen before News Broadcast, and alongside the horse race scene marking the arrival of a new era. It is also interesting to note that Madame, Lai Tai Tsui,

chairperson of the Provisional Legislative Council dresses differently.

In the intercession, we have a nation to pray for after July 1997. And the admonition to pray for the kings (1Tim. 2:2) now becomes so real to Chinese Christians in Hong Kong. In October the churches here congregate for a thanksgiving service for the National Day. Before long the church may contemplate to hoist national flag in the sanctuary. (Many churches have the national flags in the sanctuary in America). Liturgical time is the interpenetrating of the eternal and temporal time. Unless the church authenticates her in the world, she cannot have an authentic hope for the world to come. Unless the Church learns to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread", she cannot pray genuinely, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." As viators the Church is heading for the eternal city. And along the pilgrimage she needs the signs and symbols for guidance, otherwise the Church may be led astray into a historical dead-end, repeating the obsolete symbols without contemporary relevance in the assembly of the saints.

On the other hand we should be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water. Some symbols such as the sign of the cross, the fish of the Roman catacomb, advents candle lighting; these are rich symbols, among

many others, bespeak the love, faith and hope of the Christian church. If the Christian church is one, holy, and catholic, some symbols of long Christian heritage may become part of the total Christ shared by all faithful. Dr. Ho's paper depend mainly on writers of the post-modernist school which hold any grand narrative in suspicion and advocate relativity in their analysis of contemporary culture. However, in the agony of confinement to cultural fluidity, men instead look for a spiritual anchor. Thus after the fall of Rome in 410 AD and the subsequent dissolution of the Roman Empire, people found rest of the soul in the liturgy of the Benedictine monasteries. Likewise, the Russian Orthodox church, proud of her unchanged liturgical symbols, comforted the masses of people after the collapse of the USSR.

Perhaps, we may learn from the wisdom of the early church fathers, who withhold some symbols for the neophytes. In the catechetical lectures, Cyril of Jerusalem reserves six lessons on the mysteries of the Eucharist in the mystagogic. Only the neophytes are eligible to partake the Lord's Supper. They are instructed the full meaning of the Creed and Our Father, only after they are illuminated. In the pagan world, the early church hold to some Christian symbols. To become a Christian one has to learn about these symbols in order to identify with the Christian faith. Indeed

these symbols such as the sacraments, the creed (symbolum), the Lord's Prayer are the expression of Christian faith. Catechumens have to wait to learn the full meaning of these symbols and as such a yearning for truth is instilled in their hearts. As the symbol at the same time reveals and veils, the yearning intensifies. This is the charm of the symbol. The Gregorian chants may, on the surface, create a distance for the non-Christians. Nevertheless, such distance is the sacred distance that is at the same time strange and intimate. Strange as being not heard often in the mass media, intimate because the sacred music arouses the religious sentiments deep in his or her heart. Coming to God is a movement of the soul. And a movement requires distance, the sacred distance. Otherwise there will not be authentic drawing near to God on the part of the soul.

A church truly being-in-the world, should have the courage to discard, prudence to retain, and faithfulness to transform the symbols in order to be effective communicator of the gospel message.

Chapter 3

How differences in Liturgical Practice Have Been Resolved in The Post-Denominational Church Situation

KAN Bao-Ping (關保平)

The Protestant church in China now is in a post-denominational situation that may remain. As a post-denominational church rather than a united church, the diversity of liturgy shapes one of its post-denominational characteristics. In such a situation, I feel pale to complete the task entrusted to me talking about "How differences in liturgical practice have been resolved in the post-denominational situation in China". What I can say is that the differences have never been resolved.¹ They may never be able to be resolved over this issue, I have a doubt. Can we resolve the differences? Is it necessary for us to try to resolve the differences? Why do we have to resolve the differences? As I mentioned above, I am not be able to complete the task

under the title of how the differences are resolved. What I can do here is to draw a very general picture of what Christians are doing in China relating to the issue.

In the 1950s, when, under the principle of three-selves, churches from different denominations gathered together discussing the future of an authentic Chinese church, a call for a unity arose spontaneously. In his article, Chen Woxin expressed his concern that was rather common on that time.

Christianity came into China from other countries with all kinds of denominational barriers. We shall demolish those barriers and strain to reach the end together. That is the will of our Lord and that is the bright future for a authentic Chinese church.²

All churches in China came together, and a post-denominational church took its shape.³ However, the situation characterized by church structure rather than by the features of faith, liturgy, or theology. Chinese church leaders often explains that the church in China, however, is in a unity but not uniformity. It is not likely for the church in China to have a uniformed liturgy in a near future without mentioning that the post-denominational church now is in a post-modern era.⁴

Most of the churches in China now have two liturgies. They are Baptism and Eucharist. Those with more

denominational characteristics such as the Seventh Day Adventist and the True Church of Jesus have three: baptism, Eucharist and foot-washing service. I shall briefly illustrate now each of the liturgies is practiced by the churches with different denominational background.

1. Baptism

In most of the churches both sprinkling baptism and immersing baptism are practiced. Such a position is based on the belief that what really matters in the baptism is the work of the Holy Spirit, but not more or less water. The biblical basis is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of us all". (Eph. 4: 5-6) Those who are going to be baptized can make their own decisions to which kind of baptism they prefer. For many churches in China, baptism is always salvific. In a simple word, once one is saved, one will be saved forever. Christians believe that when they are baptized, all of their former sin is cleansed away, and they are saved. Such an understanding of baptism dismissed the stress on the importance for Christians to live a life which is equitable to their faith. Some even claim that after the baptism they surely will be saved even if they may commit crimes. That is why church leaders keep reminding their congregations the significance of bearing witness to the Gospel and to the love of God by living a

decent life.

That who have the background of the True Church of Jesus believe that only immersing baptism is authentic. They see those churches that practice sprinkling baptism as going astray. Christians who received sprinkling baptism must be re-baptized by immersing baptism, otherwise they will not be saved. Baptism must be implied in rivers since Jesus was baptized in a river. Because baptism signifies to die with Jesus, believers must be baptized facing down. The biblical basis is that when Jesus died on the cross, he "bowed his head" (John 19:30). For the True Jesus, there are two baptisms. One is immersing baptism by water, and another is the baptism by the Holy Spirit. Immersing baptism does not lead directly to salvation. The biblical basis is Acts 3:15-17. The Sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the ability to speak in tongues. The immersing baptism does not lead directly to salvation. Its function is a symbol of one's church membership. Only the baptism of the Holy Spirit, ensures one's salvation.

Like the True Jesus, the Seventh Day Adventists believe that only immersing baptism is authentic. What differs from the True Jesus is that their Baptism can be applied either in rivers or in ponds as long as a person can be immersed. Believers who are going to be baptized shall be immersed into water facing up since a died person is

always buried facing. The Little Flocks only practices immersing baptism as well.

2. Eucharist

It is out of question that only baptized Christians can receive bread and cup. It corresponds to its theologically evangelical position of the church in China. The understanding of Eucharist is more or less Calvinistic that is to receive the bread and cup is to remember Jesus and what he did for us. The bread and cup, spiritually speaking, include Jesus' body and blood. The function of Eucharist is that to participate in a Eucharist is to share God's atoning grace granted through Jesus. Through the Eucharist, the participants are united with Jesus Christ. Most of the churches with no denominational emphasis use other un-leavened bread or wafer. The True Church of Jesus, the Seventh Day Adventist, and the Little Flock use bread but not wafer, since their emphasis is the breaking of the bread.⁵

3. Foot-washing Service

The Seventh Day Adventist and the True Jesus have foot-washing service as one of their three liturgies. The former has the foot-washing service before their Eucharist. The biblical basis is John 13 that Jesus washed his disciples'

feet before last supper. The True Church of Jesus has foot-washing service a separate liturgy for those who just received immersing-baptism. The meaning of the service is to have part in Jesus. Its biblical basis is also John 13:8.

"The Church Order for Trial Use" published by CCC makes no special theological articulation on liturgies. The reason is trying to promote mutual respect among Christians who have different understanding of faith and theologies, and to keep all Christians together. It is important not to make barriers among Christians just because of their different understanding or different emphasis on liturgies. However, to stay behind argument may not lead to a real harmony. The liturgical difference remains. Sometimes the understanding of the difference seems so diversified that people may doubt the validity of the faith that relates to certain liturgies. What I would like to ask is: what is the purpose of the harmony? What is the basis for the harmony? If an effort for such a harmony is at the price of sacrificing our theological reflection on an ecclesiology, is that a real harmony? Why do we have to keep everyone together at such a heavy price? Richard Zhang expressed his concern.⁶

I am not saying that the church in China should separate, or the harmony is unreasonable. What concerns me is that we shall know what we are doing and why we

are doing so.⁷ It seems that we are facing a dilemma. On the one hand, it is unlikely for the church in China to shapers uniformed faith. On the other hand, theological difference is causing conflicts. Certainly let them go is not a solution. This is our context. The only solution, if there is any, may be to have an open and friendly dialogue. If the difference is unavoidable, we would better to talk about them openly. By the dialogue, we may find some common ground that may serve as the foundation on which we can work together but not attach each other.

The post-denominational situation may make people feel uncomfortable. Why is it not denominational or non-denominational, but post-denominational? I shall suggest that we shall not be dissatisfied by the post-denominational situation. That may be the best form for the church in China in the eyes of God. Adam was not satisfied by his limitation as part of his nature even though God created like that and for Him it is good. He attempted to go beyond the limitation by his own effort. The result of his endeavor was a tragedy. We shall believe that God is at work. The responsibility on our part is neither to divert the course of history by our human effort, nor to design a form for the church that may please according to our task, but to make the situation more meaningful but not harmful to Chinese Christians, Chinese Christians and to the church universal as well.

Notes

- ¹ It depends on what the connotation of "resolve" is.
- ² "The church shall go forward in a new age" *Tian Feng*. Shanghai: The China Christian Education Association, No.240, Nov.18, 1950. Vol.10, No.20, 5.
- ³ The present post-denominational situation relates to the experience of Chinese church and Chinese Christians during the cultural revolution. Through the experience, Chinese Christians understand the significance of the unity of the church.
- ⁴ The attempt to break away from tradition is one of the post-modern characteristics. Religious faith tends to focus more on individual experience rather than what the church claims. Theological emphasis shifts from only the formulation on God to the relation between God and human beings and the relation among human beings. Religious authority is no longer able to offer the only interpretation of the meaning of human existence and the meaning of religious faith in the concrete existence of human beings. All of those factors make the possibility of having a uniformed liturgy in the Chinese church remain ambiguous.
- ⁵ For them, wafer does not revolve breaking, therefore, it maintains no spiritual meaning. What makes the bread authentic is the breaking.
- ⁶ "Doing Theology in Chinese", *Chinese Theological Review*. Foundation for Theological Education in Southeast Asia: No.11:2, 1997, 137.

⁷ Richard Zhang's argument is that a real harmony should be on a ground of willingness. My argument is that the harmony also needs a well articulated theological identification which has a solid biblical ground. At the time when Chinese congregations is numerally growing very fast, what we should really keep an eye on is functionalism. It will growing very fast, what we should really keep an eye on is functionalism. It will jeopardize the church if the growth is not well led by a long term agenda.

Chapter 4

A Response to:

How differences in Liturgical Practice Have Been
Resolved in The Post-Denominational Church
Situation

Andres S. K. TANG (鄧紹光)

There are three points I would like to rise for further discussion.

Firstly, what is post-denominational Church? This essay does not give an explanation. Is it just a phenomenon happening in the contemporary China? If so, what is the theological ground for this? From this paper we can only know that there is still difference in the liturgical practice among various churches. Although difference among churches is respected, we still can ask: according to what theological reason can this difference be accepted without any hesitation? In this sense how is a post-denominational Church different from a denominational Church?

Secondly, it follows that both the diversity and unity are false. While various practices are accepted

without theological confrontation, the strength and weakness of various traditions cannot be recognized. True unity cannot be reached without any awareness of one's theological difference from the other. Otherwise such a kind of mutual recognition would be superficial. In Hong Kong the churches all explicitly emphasize their difference in liturgical practice from one another. However, they never enter into any real theological confrontation so as to arrive at any common theological understanding. This is just the case of the Church in China.

Thirdly, this paper advocates that we should not be dissatisfied by the post-denomination situation. Why? What is the rationale for us to be satisfied with the present situation? Is it a political or a theological one? If it is the former, a theological one still should be pursued. We cannot view the diversity and unity as mutual opposition. Rather, dialectic between these two should be introduced as diversity in unity and unity in diversity. From the history of the early Church one can learn a lot on this. The only way for a post-denomination Church in China should be a dialogue one. Have the various traditions hidden in Church started their dialogue yet?

Chapter 5

Worship and Prayer Life in the Chinese Congregation: Hong Kong's Lutheran Churches

Patrick K. K. CHAN (陳國權)

“Worship” is the center of the life of the church. Every Sunday, thousands upon thousands of Christians lay down jobs and social activities and go to church in a mood of happiness and gratitude to worship the Holy Triune God. As part of the universal church, Hong Kong Lutheran churches are no exception. They express their living religious faith and experience through each Sunday's worship.

The Lutheran denomination in Hong Kong includes the following eight Chinese churches: the Tsung Tsin Mission, the Chinese Rhenish Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church, the Hong Kong and Macau Lutheran Church, the South Asian Lutheran

Evangelical Mission, the Lutheran Philip House Church and the Tao Fung Shan Christian Centre.¹ Although these eight Chinese Lutheran churches are not completely alike with regard to their history, geography, theological background or target groups,² with regard to their worship life they have certain experiences in common.

1. The Liturgical Environment

Although the designs of Hong Kong Lutheran churches cannot compare with the beauty and brilliance of the designs of the Eastern Orthodox or Catholic churches, nevertheless, the churches' simple furnishings and arrangements can fully reflect their theological thought and spiritual experience. Practically all believers (and even unbelievers) who enter Lutheran churches are unexpectedly attracted by the following furnishings: the altar, the pulpit and scripture reading lectern, the baptismal lave and the colored banners. These furnishings truly represent the special characteristics of the worship of Hong Kong Lutheran churches: life with the Holy Scripture as the center. The pulpit and scripture reading lectern is a holy, solemn place; the reading out and proclaiming of the Holy Scripture emanate from there. During the worship service, Christ himself is present in the scripture that is read or proclaimed and contacts us

and speaks to us. The altar is also a solemn and dignified place in the worship time. It symbolizes the place of the presence of God and is also the place for setting out the feast of the kingdom of heaven (Holy Communion). The baptismal lave reminds us of the fact that we become the children of God through baptism. It is appropriate to position the lave at the entrance of the church. This signifies that we must first go through baptism before we can enter the church and become a part of the body of Christ. We can also come before the baptismal lave to admit our sin and obtain absolution. This also reminds us that admission of sin is a return to baptism.

Every Sunday, believers assemble before the pulpit and scripture reading lectern to listen to and receive the teachings of the gospel. They also line up before the altar to receive Christ's holy body and precious blood. The believer's faith and spiritual life thus grow into vigorous maturity under the molding of "the Word that can be heard" and "the Word that can be seen."

The altar, the pulpit and scripture reading lectern and the banners that are hung on the walls occupy an important position in the worship. The colors and the designs of these banners are changed according to the seasons of the church year. The traditional colors used during the Advent Season are purple and blue. Both blue

and purple are symbols of hope—the new hope that Jesus Christ brought to mankind when he came to earth. The color that the church uses from the Epiphany on January 6th to the First Sunday after the Epiphany is white. The purpose is to prolong the atmosphere of Christmas — that is, excitement, joy and radiance. The main color from the Second Sunday after the Epiphany until the day before the Last Sunday after the Epiphany is green. Green represents life and growth-renewal and growth in the spiritual life. The color is white for the last Sunday after the Epiphany, that is Jesus' Transfiguration, and the two days following. This represents Christ's splendor and glory. The color used during the Lenten Season is a deep purple. Deep purple is the symbol of repentance, admission of sin and self-control. Christ suffered for us, was afflicted for us and was killed for us. White is the color used by the church during the Easter Season. But the church may, in the alternative, use gold. Although white expresses resurrection, purification and happiness according to the tradition of the church, for Chinese the color white easily provokes thoughts of the dead or of funerals. Therefore the use of gold is more suitable for Chinese culture. The color used for Whitesunday (Pentecost) and the week following is red. This represents the flames of the Holy Spirit. On this day the church puts fresh flowers and green

leaves everywhere to express the Creator of Life's Holy Spirit — the purpose of the arrival of the breath of God was to renew all things. Green is used during the 28 weeks following Whitesunday because this is the period during which the church and believers grew, were ransomed and were sanctified in the Holy Spirit. So, besides creating an atmosphere of worship and increasing the aesthetic feeling in the church, the banners also present the events of the life of Jesus Christ one by one — the advent, the ministry, the suffering, the crucifixion, the burial, the resurrection, the sending of the Holy Spirit and the Second Coming — before the eyes of the congregation through colors and pictures. In other words, not only can the ear hear and the mouth taste the religion of the Word who became flesh, but also the eyes can see. The banners are "visual theology."

2. The Worship Liturgy

Though Hong Kong Lutheran churches do not have a set worship liturgy that is commonly recognized by everyone, certain common features can be found in the denomination's liturgical tradition. For example, we all agree on the importance of the Holy Scripture and the Holy Communion in worship. No reform of Martin Luther's during the Reformation was more creative than the reform

of the liturgy. Luther's contribution to reformation of the liturgy was not only translating it into his native language and writing and compiling numerous songs suitable for congregational singing. Even more significant was renewing the emphasis on and increasing the prominence of the appropriate place of the Holy Scripture and Holy Communion in worship. Without doubt, this produced a deep and far-reaching impact on the spirituality of the believers of that day as well as the church after that time. As Frank Senn has said: "we must admit that the liturgical reforms that had the most direct impact on piety were the emphasis on preaching of the Word and frequent partaking of Holy Communion. Without the preaching of the Word, there is no worship. Without communicants there is no mass. These became the principles of Lutheran liturgical life."³

Though Hong Kong Lutheran churches do not have a standardized liturgy, from the standpoint of structure the liturgy can broadly be divided into two parts: the "Liturgy of the Word" and the "Liturgy of the Eucharist." The Liturgy of the Word can be traced back to the assemblies at synagogues in the Old Testament era. The center of this part is the preaching of and meditation on the Word of God. The Liturgy of the Eucharist can also be traced back to the temple worship and offerings in the Old

Testament era. The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist each have their respective high points. The former has the reading out and preaching of the gospel. The latter has the celebration of and partaking of Holy Communion.

The Word of God is not a body of objective knowledge or rigidified teachings. It is rather a kind of proclamation activity that provokes the audience to make a response. Since this is the case, the objective of proclaiming (preaching) in the Liturgy of the Word is not only to make the teachings of the Bible alive before the eyes, but to make them alive in the listeners' hearts and to produce faith. Preaching that is able to call forth faith in this way may even bring Christ to the worship time to come before the congregation. This is what Luther says in his 1526 discussion of the sacrament of Christ's body and precious blood:

When I proclaim the gospel of Christ, I use my voice to bring Christ into our hearts so that he may be formed within you. If you truly believe so that you attentively listen to what I say and take firm hold of that voice in your hearts-in that case, tell me, what do you actually have in your hearts? You will certainly answer that you have the true Christ in your hearts. That is not

to say that he sits there as a man sitting on a chair, but as though he were sitting on the right hand of God the Father. How has this actually come about?

You cannot know, but in your hearts you feel his presence with certainty. Through the experience of the faith, you know with complete certainty that he is there.⁴

In worship, preaching of the Word is very clearly a sacramental activity. It is God himself in Jesus Christ coming to his people through the preaching to bestow the grace of forgiveness of sins. But at the same time he enters them and builds up faith in himself. Without doubt, this is worship and proclamation completely centered on the Word of God and Jesus Christ. Of course at the present time there are some Hong Kong Lutheran churches that have been influenced by the traditions of certain denominations and have left the consistent spirit of Lutheran liturgy. "Some have put an equals sign between the Bible and the gospel and stress that when they are in the pulpit they preach the (pure) Bible, but they neglect the fact that the gospel is the soul of the Bible. On the other hand, others emphasize an individual's feelings and reception during worship and exalt the view that 'worship must satisfy a person's emotional needs. They put the focus entirely on 'the person.' Whether it is prayer, the singing

of hymns, praise or even listening to the Word, they pursue a 'high' kind of feeling."⁵ Not surprisingly, every kind of above-mentioned deviation "in essence goes directly counter to the spirit of Luther's reformation of the mass and brings back the errors committed by the Roman Church of that time."⁶

Christ is not present only in the Word, he is also truly present in Holy Communion. As to the manner of Christ's presence, Hong Kong Lutheran churches avoid any kind of metaphysical conjecturing but simply cite the traditional Lutheran formula by way of explanation: Christ is present "under the bread, with the bread, in the bread."⁷ Christ is wonderfully united with the bread and the wine through the Holy Scripture. The purpose is to use his own broken body to feed our spirits; to use the precious blood that he shed on the cross to cleanse our sin and to reconcile us with God.

The high point of the Liturgy of the Eucharist is the congregation receiving Holy Communion together. This is also the objective of the entire celebration ceremony. All who come forward to participate in this meal are the guests of the heavenly feast. They are all invited to come near the altar to face the holy bridegroom. He stands in the entrance of the bridal chamber to receive them. They will become one with the Lord's resurrected body. His blood will flow

in their veins. They will come together over his body and will drink together at one source of life. In Hong Kong Lutheran churches⁸ at this high point, the choir will lead the congregation in singing the beautiful and moving "Praise to the Lamb," praising the great love of the Word of God whom became flesh:

O Lamb of God. You have taken away the sin of the world. Have mercy on us.

O Lamb of God. You have taken away the sin of the world. Have mercy on us.

O Lamb of God. You have taken away the sin of the world. Give us peace.

Under the influence of the solemn proceedings, the beautiful hymns and the voice of the invitation the entire worship atmosphere becomes one of sacred dignity and causes the congregation to experience deeply the presence of God. The congregation then returns thanks for all these heavenly gifts:

Our souls shall give thanks to Jehovah. Our hearts shall praise the Lord's holy name . . . shall give thanks for the work of the Savior. You were our Lamb on the cross. You redeemed us from our sin. You are

given to us again today through Holy Communion. You are our spiritual food. We pray for the Lord's blessing. Let our new man grow daily. Let faith and virtue grow daily stronger. Let love increase daily. Let hope increase daily. Cause us to be witnesses of the truth for all of our lives. Until at last we are able to enjoy the eternal blessings of the kingdom of heaven and commune with the Triune Lord eternally. These are our earnest desires. Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.⁹

Almighty Lord, Eternal God, we thank you because you have used this gift of spiritual cultivation to renew us. We ask you to grant love continuously and use this gift to strengthen us so that all of our faith in you and the love in our hearts for each other may increase. All things depend on Jesus Christ, the only begotten son with whom you are well pleased, our Lord, who with the Holy Spirit has the power and glory, the only God, the true God who is without beginning and without end. Amen.¹⁰

Heavenly Father of love, we praise and thank you because you have given your only begotten and beloved son to suffer and die for us. Today you again give us his body and his precious blood to be the food of eternal life. Bestow grace on us lowly sinners that we may return into the fellowship of his life. Give us your Holy Spirit, we pray.

Help us to remember your grace always. Cause our faith, love and hope to continue and increase, that all of our lives we will know how to glorify the name of the Lord and to help the multitudes; that when we come to the end of this world's road we may be accepted by the Lord and enjoy the feast of the kingdom of heaven. In the name of your holy son, Jesus Christ, we pray. These are our earnest desires.¹¹

The faith, love and hope of the congregation obtain strengthening through the nourishment of Holy Communion. Because of this, they can then leave in peace and give witness to the world saying: "The Lord Christ has risen!" Not only this, but they will look forward even more to the Lord's Second Coming with joyful hearts.

Not only do Hong Kong Lutheran believers receive the grace of forgiveness of sins during the Liturgies of the Word and the Eucharist every Sunday; they are also spiritually strengthened and grow. "It is no wonder that the preaching of the Word and the frequent taking of Holy Communion are called the 'twin mountain peaks' of Lutheran liturgy."¹²

3. The Sacraments and the Ceremonies

Lutheran churches everywhere, including Hong Kong Lutheran churches, recognize only two sacraments:

baptism and Holy Communion. These two sacraments are both conducted during the worship liturgy. In other words, the grace that comes through these two sacraments comes to the congregation through the conduct of the liturgy.

What is a sacrament? According to the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession, "On the Church's Task of Preaching the Word":

He has used these (the gospel and the sacraments) as the means to give the Holy Spirit to men. The Holy Spirit, as he pleases, produces faith (in the hearts) of those who listen to the gospel at the times and at the places that are pleasing to God.¹³

According to this article, the sacraments are a means by which the grace of the Holy Spirit is bestowed. Through this and other means the Holy Spirit arouses faith in people and causes them to have full conviction that justification and the obtaining of life are based on Christ's grace and are freely given. In other words, the sacraments are a means of bestowing grace that God uses to enable men to obtain the promise of the gospel — the promise of forgiveness of sins. In the discussion of the sacraments in the fifth chapter of *Questions and Answers on Important Truths of the New Life*, it is stated: "the sacraments were established by

the Lord Jesus for giving the grace of forgiveness of sins through a tangible means to those who accept with a believing heart."¹⁴ Therefore, whatever is called a sacrament must include the following characteristics:

- A. It must have been established by Jesus himself;
- B. It must be conveyed through a tangible means (water, bread and wine);
- C. This grace of the forgiveness of sins is given to those who accept with a believing heart.

The reason Lutheran churches retain only baptism and Holy Communion as sacraments is that only these two meet the conditions and special characteristics of a sacrament.

Baptism is a covenant of grace concluded by God and the believer. Through ordinary water, God uses the union of his Word and the water to enable those who accept to obtain forgiveness of sins and to enjoy the blessing of eternal life.¹⁵ Therefore Lutheran churches hold that baptism is not only a public event to testify of a certain person's faith; more significantly, it is an act whereby forgiveness is obtained for an individual's sin, new life is recovered, there is union with Christ and the individual becomes a part of His body. This is just what Paul says: "we have already been buried with him into death through baptism...if we are one in Christ (united/combined) in his

death, we will also experience his resurrection in the same way" (Romans 6: 4-5). When explaining this union between Christ and us, Andres Nygren says: "The meaning of the choice of the verb 'united' in this verse is that previously we were not a part of Christ's body. But from now on we belong to the head and will not be separated. Or to use another similar way of putting it, the meaning of the choice of this verb 'united' in this verse is that we are the branches. Previously we did not belong to this grapevine, Christ. But we have been grafted onto this grapevine, have been united with him and grow together with him. Therefore, from now on, we are a part of the grapevine and derive our nourishment and strength therefrom."¹⁶ Therefore we become a part of Christ's body through baptism. Baptism is a tangible means through which Christ dwells in us and his assent is obtained. Because of this Lutheran churches believe that at the time the one receiving baptism is baptized he receives the fullness of grace. Christ, the perfect God, gives us the full grace of the Holy Spirit through baptism. No one on earth can add anything to this grace.

The baptism ceremony contains several key elements. One is the rejection of the works of the devil. Before turning back to righteousness and accepting or being baptized, the one being baptized was originally a

person controlled by the forces of darkness. He was a follower of demons. Therefore, the pastor conducting the ceremony must "exorcise the demons" for the one being baptized before the baptism:

The pastor asks: Are you willing to forsake the devil, all things of the devil, the evil ways and vanity of the world, and to control the selfish desires of the heart and resist all temptation? The answer "yes" follows.¹⁷

A second matter is the turning back to righteousness. This is an act done by the one being baptized under the influence of the proclamation of the Holy Scripture and the moving of the Holy Spirit. The one being baptized rejects the acts of the devil and turns back to Christ. This is an important moment in a person's life because the new life is about to begin. The doors of the kingdom of heaven are about to open for him, and the road to union with Christ is about to be laid down for him.

The pastor asks: Are you willing to be faithful for your entire life and follow the injunctions of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Triune God, and observe his commandments? The answer "yes" follows.¹⁸

A third matter is the performance of the baptism. Hong Kong Lutheran churches adopt the pouring or sprinkling methods of baptism. They do not oppose immersion, "but oppose the viewpoint that only immersion

constitutes baptism."¹⁹ The pastor sprinkles water on the head of the one being baptized three times and says, "insert name, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen."²⁰ So when the one being baptized dies in the water, it is not only the flesh that dies, but the evil passions and the selfish desires of the flesh also die, "so that we should walk in the newness of life" (Romans 6:4). The one being baptized is born again and obtains salvation through the water and God's Word.

A fourth matter is the living out of an individual's baptism. Baptism is not merely history. It is a matter that happens every day. As Martin Luther says: "the baptism symbol symbolizes that the old Adam inside of us and all the sin and selfish desires should be drowned and die during every day's grief, repentance and reform so that the new man can be reborn every day and be clean and righteous and live eternally before the face of God."²¹ Because of this, baptism is a life-long experience for the Christian. The Christian life could even be regarded as daily baptism. Luther writes: "The Christian life is nothing if not daily baptism. Since it has started, it must continue to be observed."²² In another place he points out that man's responsibility is to "yield oneself to baptism and to participate in the activity of God's grace so that sin can be opposed and destroyed until the day of leaving this

world."²³ In this way the entire Christian life is lived in the power of baptism and profit can be obtained therefrom. It can be seen from this that Luther really puts baptism at the center of the Christian life.

Therefore a Christian's spiritual life, or daily life, is a daily return to baptism—that is, causing the new man to obtain rebirth daily because of faith through eradication of the old Adam in daily repentance. Only in this way are we able to attain the same condition as Christ. Lutheran churches regard the Christian's spiritual life, or daily life, as basically "a daily call to repentance and reform, a daily return to the righteousness that God has declared is ours, a daily call to faith and dependence on the work that God has accomplished in us and will accomplish. The daily return to the fruit brought by baptism is rebirth and the new life."²⁴

Holy Communion is the center of the Christian's life. It is also the source and motive force for growth in the spiritual life of the Christian. The meaning of "Eucharist" in the original language is "thankfulness." This is because we celebrate this feast with a thankful heart. Our thankfulness is because Holy Communion is an Easter feast. Every Sunday the risen Lord comes among us hidden in ordinary bread and wine. Without doubt, every time we hear "this is my body," "this is my blood" during worship

we firmly believe that Christ has already come among us. Christ is together with us because we believe:

- A. The Christ of yesterday is the Jesus at the Passover Supper. He proclaimed his own death. We remember that the method God chose to save the world was the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of Christ's blood. When we take Holy Communion together and eat Christ's body and drink Christ's blood, we have a part in God's work of salvation and redemption.
- B. The Christ of today is the Christ who is present at the feast. He is Emmanuel, that is God is with us. "The Word of Life" forgives our sins and teaches us to become his disciples. Since he is the master of the feast, he nourishes us with his own flesh and blood so that our spiritual life may be strengthened.
- C. The Christ of tomorrow refers to another feast that will soon arrive, that is the great feast of the kingdom of heaven that is coming. Some experience of the great feast of tomorrow is obtained through the feast of today. Today we obtain a sight of what we yearn for. In the universe all things that were made will become one under the sovereignty of Christ.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist has four important liturgical acts: He "takes" the bread, "gives thanks", "breaks it" and "gives" it to his disciples. The first act is

"taking". This is our present day Offertory. The bread and the wine are brought before the altar and are offered. We are also offered together with the bread and the wine. The bread and wine are created things that come from the earth. They are the fruit of man's labor.

The bread contains such elements as water, fire, earth and air and also combines the skills and workmanship of the sower, the reaper and the bread maker. The wine is also the product of the earth and the fruit of man's labor. When these articles are offered, our lives are offered at the same time. Saint Augustine wrote: "That which is on the plate is you. That which is in the cup is also you."

The second act is the giving of thanks. The main thing is the Eucharist Prayer. Thanks are the main part of the Eucharist Prayer. It includes praise-acclamation of holiness (the Sanctus). Afterwards is the prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is the climax of the Eucharist Prayer.²⁵ We make supplication for the bread and the wine so that man may obtain renewal. This expresses the entire life of the Christian and the main theme of the prayer. "The Eucharist Prayer is the core of the prayers of all Christians, the core of the liturgy and the core of the life of the fellowship . . . Holy Communion is the center of the church's worship, and the Eucharist Prayer is the center

of Holy Communion."²⁶

The third act is the "breaking of the bread." As wheat that is everywhere in the wheat fields and grapes that are everywhere in the wild are now gathered together and have become wine and bread and are placed on the altar, so the church calls the faithful together from the four corners of the earth to enter the kingdom of God. Therefore the breaking of the bread and the distribution of it are related to unity. This is a symbol of peace/safety and fellowship. The broken bread represents Christ's body (that is, his church). Though it is scattered throughout the earth, it is still one body. The broken bread must be shared in unity. We are broken so that our lives can be shared with others.

The fourth act is the "giving." This is the moment the congregation lines up to receive the Communion. This is the climax of Holy Communion. In the body of Christ and in the precious blood, the congregation is united and shares. The Lord Jesus says: "My flesh can indeed be eaten and my blood can indeed be drunk. He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in me and I dwell in him" (John 6: 55-56). So when we receive Communion, we are each imbued with sacred life. We become one with God.

During the act of Holy Communion, the complete pattern of the devotional or spiritual life is revealed with

nothing left out: offering, blessing, breaking and sharing. We offer up our lives and our lives are blessed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. We are broken for the world. We are called together to be one body so that we can have deep union with God. It can be clearly seen that the life of Hong Kong Lutheran believers cannot be separated from the sacraments. Regeneration of life depends upon baptism. The consolidation and cultivation of the new life depends upon frequent taking of Holy Communion. Edmund Schlink in *The Theology of the Lutheran Creed* has well said that:

All that is needed in the life of a Christian is still daily repentance and reformation, that is, a daily return to baptism and a coming before the Lord's altar. In other words, the life of a Christian is lived between these two sacraments.²⁷

Though Hong Kong Lutheran churches do not recognize other sacraments besides baptism and Holy Communion, they still revere all of the ceremonies such as marriage, funerals, burial, ground breaking, foundation laying, completion and entering into a partnership. Almost all Lutheran churches have compiled liturgical texts for these ceremonies. So no matter what situation in life a

believer is in—such as birth, old age, death or burial — he may experience in the liturgy the grace and blessing that comes from God.

On the subject of Christianity, the historical theologian Georges Florovsky said: "Christianity is a liturgical religion. The church is basically an organization for worship. First there is worship. Only afterwards is there doctrine and discipline."²⁸ It is believed that Hong Kong Lutheran churches deeply appreciate the truth of this saying. It cannot be denied that through a multi-faceted liturgical life, the Hong Kong Lutheran churches express their living faith and their deep and expansive theology in a concrete way before others.

Notes

¹ 蕭克諧，《認識信義宗教會》，（香港：道聲出版社，1997），頁101-102。

² *Ibid.*, pp.102-121.

³ Frank C. Senn, "Lutheran Spirituality," in Frank C. Senn, ed., *Protestant spiritual Traditions* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), p.21.

⁴ Martin Luther, "Treatise on the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ—Against the Fanatice," *LW* 36:340

- ⁵ 羅永光，〈崇拜的取捨——寫於九七年改教運動紀念崇拜前〉，《信義報》，第69期（香港，1997年10），頁2。

⁶ *Ibid.*

- ⁷ *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VII*; Tappert, p.575.

- ⁸ 參《基督教香港信義會主日崇拜禮儀》，頁11。

- ⁹ 參《禮賢會規定禮文》，頁80。

- ¹⁰ 參《基督教香港信義會主日崇拜禮儀》，頁12。

- ¹¹ 參《中華基督教崇真會禮拜儀式》，頁116-117。

- ¹² Senn, *Lutheran Spirituality*, p.25.

- ¹³ *The Augsburg Confession, Articles of Faith and Doctrine V*; Tappert, p.31.

- ¹⁴ 《新生命問答要理》，頁76。

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

- ¹⁶ 虞格仁，《羅馬書注釋》，（香港：道聲出版社，1975），頁207。

- ¹⁷ 參《禮賢會規定禮文》，頁80。

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

- ¹⁹ 蕭克諧，《認識信義宗教會》，頁161。

- ²⁰ 《基督教信義宗禮拜與聖事禮儀》，第三版，（香港：道聲出版社，1978），頁125。

- ²¹ Martin Luther, "Small Catechism", in *The Boom of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed., Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), p.220.

- ²² WA 30 I, p.220.

- ²³ WA 2, p.730f; LW 35, pp.33ff.

- ²⁴ Richard Jensen, "Justification-Where faith and experience Meet", *Dialog*, 21(1982), p.41.

- ²⁵ 參《基督教香港信義會主日崇拜禮儀》，頁10。

- ²⁶ Kenneth Leech, *True Prayer: An Invitation to Christian Spirituality*, p.105.

- ²⁷ Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*,

p.180.

- ²⁸ Cited in Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (England: Penguin Books, 1963), p.271.

Chapter 6

A Response to:

Worship and Prayer Life in the Chinese
Congregation: Hong Kong's Lutheran Churches

Thomas YU (俞繼斌)

I am very happy and honored to have the opportunity of reading Pastor Patrick K. K. Chan's article, "Worship Life in Hong Kong's Lutheran Churches." I have been appointed at short notice to respond to Pastor Chan's work. Therefore I am only able to make a very brief response to Pastor Chan's paper and must ask for instruction from Pastor Chan and everyone else if my reading has not been deep enough or if my understanding is incomplete.

As for me, this is the first time I have read an article that specifically discusses the worship life of Hong Kong Lutheran churches. Therefore I was very interested to know of Pastor Chan's observations and exposition. Pastor Chan

introduces the special characteristics of the worship life of

Hong Kong's eight Lutheran churches using the method of finding the common ground amongst differences. My own feeling is that the contents of this lecture is rich and clear. It succinctly and vividly gives an outline of the basic contours and main contents of the worship life of the Hong Kong Lutheran churches.

I briefly mention some of my own responses and questions hereunder:

A. The liturgical environment involves the design, use and furnishing of the church space. The use and furnishing of different spaces reflect different worship perspectives and affect the visual sense and the feeling of the worshippers. The arrangement of the altar, pulpit and scripture reading lectern and the baptismal lave as well as the hanging of the banners and the changing of the banners according to the seasons in Lutheran churches reflect the emphasis and characteristics of our theology of worship. As for the aural sense, besides emphasizing listening to the preaching of the scripture from the pulpit, that is, the law and the gospel, the transmission of God's word and the congregation's worship of and giving of thanks to God through sacred music is also emphasized.

B. In his discussion of the worship liturgy, Pastor Chan

holds that the worship liturgy of Hong Kong Lutheran churches is mainly comprised of two parts: one is the "Liturgy of the Word" and one is the "Liturgy of the Eucharist." In the former, when hearing the proclamation of the Holy Word, the congregation actually experiences the presence of Christ in the process of hearing and believing. In the latter, the congregation actually receives Christ's sacred body and precious blood as well as the grace of forgiveness of sins when responding to the Lord's invitation. I think it is natural and normal that the congregation is affected, to the point of being deeply affected, during the hearing of the Holy Scripture and the receiving of Holy Communion. The congregation's expectations of worship, their expectation to be touched by God's word and by his grace and love are not completely a surrender to the emotions. On the contrary, if this kind of expectation and feeling is absent, we should be concerned and investigate what the reasons are.

Concerning the second main section, I have two small questions. One is whether the translation of the phrase "with the bread" in the second line from the bottom on page three as "together with the bread" (「與餅一起」) rather than "among the bread" (「在餅的當中」) is very fitting. Another is where it says that after taking Holy

Communion, "His blood" will flow in our "veins". Will this kind of interpretation give rise to misunderstanding?

In the discussion of baptism, it is mentioned that Lutheran churches do not hold that baptism is only a kind of public admission of faith; it also includes forgiveness of sin, rebirth, union with Christ and becoming a part of his body. Lutheran churches hold baptism in high regard, but I find that, generally speaking, in Lutheran churches the teaching on baptism, or more broadly, the teaching on the sacraments is not necessarily very clear with the result that there are many misunderstandings. "If when he is baptized the one receiving baptism receives the fullness of grace," can we expect that everyone who receives baptism is necessarily the true disciple of Christ?

It mentions a person being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and "the one being baptized dies in the water." What is the meaning of this sentence? Where the sprinkling ceremony method is used, there is not much problem. But if immersion is used, then there is a serious problem about the one being baptized dying in the water.

Finally I would like to raise a practical question. How can churches conducting liturgical worship avoid making liturgical worship change into worship that lacks vitality, energy, warmth and joy? That is to say, how can

worship that is ceremonial kept from slipping into becoming mechanical and formalistic? I truly hope that the Lutheran churches of Chinese people, no matter what region they belong to, can, "through a multi-faceted liturgical life, express their living faith and their deep and expansive theology in a concrete way before others.

Chapter 7

Contextualization of Christian Faith Expressed in Worship Life

Peter K.H. LEE (李景雄)

Introduction

The word "contextualization" is used in the English title of this paper. Other related words, "indigenization" and "inculturation" (or their respective implications), also appear in the course of this presentation. Allow me to begin by explaining these three related terms, indigenization, contextualization, and inculturation. These are awkward-sounding comments in relation to them at the beginning in order to help us get into the subject at hand from various angles, as they do have nuances of meaning although they revolve around a similar concern.

Indigenization (本色化), the oldest term, became prevalent in the 1920s when Protestant Christians in China answering to the charge that Christianity is a "foreign

religion" (洋教), attempted to make Christianity an indigenous religion, i.e., a religion that takes on local colour. The "local colour" is conceived mostly in terms of Chinese culture. Those who were engaged in the work of indigenization tended to take Chinese culture as though it were an age-old package kept intact. At that time few had developed a critical hermeneutical method. Some of the writers and practitioners were so wrapped up in the local colour that they lost sight of the true colour of the Christian faith. Interestingly the Chinese expression 本色 (ben-she) can be taken to mean original or true colour (as in 英雄 "the true colour of a hero") or local colour.

Contextualization (處境化) is a term that came into current usage in the 1960s in Asian theological education circles. It was popularized by the Taiwanese theological educator Shoki Coe. He was concerned about making theological education in Asia relevant to the Asian situation. To this end he thought that it is not enough to take the inherited cultural heritage only, but to be aware of social changes and to take into account the contemporary political and economic realities. The term "contextualization" was introduced to counter-act the look-to-the-past mentality and to call for a take-the-present-context seriously attitude. Shoki Coe and others who were involved in the contextualized approach to theological

education spoke of context and text in the same breath. The text is a biblical text or a theological text as the source of the Christian message. A text always has its historical and literary context. The theological task is to let the chosen text address the context at hand, which is contemporary yet not necessarily cut off from the past. Contextualization calls for sophisticated hermeneutical skill.

Inculturation (融入文化/本土化) is a term that is used more in Catholic circles. The term also arises in the missionary context, where the missionary is keenly aware of the necessity of translating the Church's mission into the local church's situation. "Translation", used in a wider sense, is not only translation in the linguistic sense, but also as applied to liturgy, music, the style of missionary work, etc. Inculturation is not too different from indigenization. But what strikes me about inculturation is in the prefix "in"; it implies entering or developing into culture or getting under the skin of the given cultural phenomena. What gets at the heart-beat of culture? The Christian faith or the church faithful to its mission. The former Superior General of the Jesuit Society, Arrupe makes this vivid when he says that in inculturation the Gospel animates the culture and in time may even transfigure elements in it.

In the body of this presentation I will have occasions to

make use of the approaches implied by all the three terms mentioned above. But whatever approaches are followed, we should be aware of their correlatives as the mainspring of the theological task. Thus:

Indigenization—the true Christian colour (or essence)

Contextualization—the text, Biblical or theological

Inculturation—animated by the Christian faith or
mission

We are now ready to move into the main concern of this presentation, namely, worship and liturgy. It may sound redundant to speak of worship and liturgy at the same time. But the two words, though related, do not mean exactly the same. When using the word "worship", we mean public worship. In its Greek root, *leitourgia* means the work or service of the people. Liturgy does involve people at work or in service in some kind of public setting. So liturgy has a public character. But in time liturgy has evolved into a ritual for worship that can be written down. In some circles "liturgy" sounds too ritualistic. "Worship" has a broader scope of meaning: it includes the formalized rituals but it permits informal ways of worship too. "Worship and liturgy" really cover a large territory, but in this short presentation we are chiefly concerned about the indigenization (or contextualization, or inculturation) issues involved, and we will use illustrations instead of

discussing principles in the abstract.

To help us think in concrete terms, let us place ourselves at a public worship situation. Already we find ourselves in a place, where people are gathering for worship. A worship service will take place in it, with beginning and ending. If formal worship, i.e., liturgy, has form, there is substance in it, and may I add, spirit breathes in it too. The liturgy, even if it can be written down, manifests itself in audible media (singing, reading, preaching, prayer, instrumental music, etc.) The liturgy also realizes itself through visual media (decorations, vestments, symbols).

1. Place of Worship

The place of worship is, commonly speaking, a church. A church is a building. Usually it is a separate building. In a place like Hong Kong, where land is scarce, there are churches which occupy the space of a flat(s) in a multi-storey building. Whether as a separate building or occupying flat-space, a church has architectural design, furnishings (pulpit, lectern, altar, pews, etc.), symbols and other decorations. We cannot take up these items at length and can only make a few points by way of illustrations.

With respect to church architecture, the issue is indigenization without falling flat on mere accommodation. The great majority of Protestants churches

in Hong Kong are not accustomed to thinking in terms of indigenization of Church architecture at all.

One of a few cases of satisfactory indigenized church architecture is the Holy Trinity Church (Anglican), Kowloon. The outward appearance of the church building has an identifiable Chinese architectural style as is shown by the roof tiles and eaves with curved ends, but these Chinese features are not accentuated so as to lead to an association with a Buddhist temple, and there are Christian symbolisms (like crosses), but not too conspicuously placed, to give a Christian identity. In the sanctuary the lamp shades and altar also have Chinese features but again there is no danger of association with a Buddhist temple. The chancel is spacious and the decorations are simple and dignified. The altar, with rounded downward curves at the ends, is of Chinese style but it is devoid of objects such as would be found on a sacrifice altar in an ancestral hall, and instead are placed beautifully but dignified-looking candelabra and other decorative objects with Christian symbolism. Several stained glass windows, with plain design, and effective lighting in the chancel enhance the sense of holiness in worshipping the Trinitarian God.

For a contrast, take a look at the chapel at the Tao Fong Shan Christian Mission to Buddhists. That mission intentionally set out to reach Buddhists, and its buildings

have consciously taken over Buddhist architectural elements. The whole compound is well planned and beautiful. But the total effect is that it betrays syncretistic tendencies. The chapel is octagonal in shape, like a Chinese pagoda, with a tiled roof curved upwards to a pointed dome top. The pillars are in red. The whole structure is aesthetically satisfying from the outside. Inside the octagonal shape of the sanctuary, originally separate low stools, arranged in semi-circular rows, were used, much as Buddhist monks sit for meditation, and that would have been acceptable for Christian corporate worship too, to heighten a sense of fellowship. Alas! Later on long and straight-back pews were introduced to replace the stools, and the pews are now arranged in straight lines, quite out of place in a round-shaped floor-plan. And the altar faced by the worshipers? It is in the shape of a typical sacrifice table found in a Chinese ancestral hall or Buddhist temple. To be sure, a cross (a Nestorian cross arising from a lotus flower) is placed on an altar to show that this is a Christian place of worship. But it is the profuse symbolism on the front panel of the altar that are confusing. Lotus seeds, plum blossom petals and other decorations, all painted in gold, are there as symbols. Symbols for what? No one knows for sure. What is more, these excessive decorations and symbolisms distract from Christian worship. The

Nestorian cross sitting on a lotus blossom was adopted by the founder of the Christian Mission to Buddhists, Karl L. Reichelt, to be an indigenized Christian symbol (the Nestorians were the first Christians to start a mission in China and the lotus blossom is a Buddhist symbol). A case can be made to defend that cross as an example of indigenization (e.g. the Christian faith fulfills Buddhism), but that is subject to debate. On the walls of the sanctuary hang wooden panels carved with passages from the Chinese translations of the Nestorian sutras to show the Nestorian's efforts of indigenization —alas! Those were indigenization efforts in an immature stage.

Let me cite another example of indigenous Christian decorations in a Chinese congregation. The Kowloon Methodist Church on Gascoigne Road has a spacious and properly lit sanctuary with a high ceiling. It is the pair of wooden panels carved in very fine craftsmanship with grapes and vines, painted gold, hanging on the wall on both sides of the altar, that are a prized specimen of indigenization. The grapes and vines are biblical symbols and they are carved in a Chinese style of high artistic quality. The gilded colour does not give a cheap, commercial appearance, but, rather, enhances a sense of "worshiping the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

Now there is a case of a curious kind of indigenization or contextualization of church architecture.

The Methodist Church in Wanchai, Hong Kong, stood for half a century as a noteworthy Chinese indigenous church architecture. It was a separate church building of Chinese architectural style with red bricks and green roof tiles and curved eaves. With its distinctly Chinese architectural style, the church stood out as a Chinese Christian church at a busy crossroad. But that church building was becoming delabitated, and it would have been too costly to renovate the whole building. To fit into the context of modern Hong Kong where real estate value sky-rockets, a developer offered to develop that piece of property by building a 24-storey could be used as a church. So the proposed plan was to build a contemporary building with a church in the lower part (8 storeys) and commercial offices on the top (16 storeys). The property developer would pay for all the costs of the construction of the entire building except for the interior decorations of the church and would offer a handsome sum of compensation. The offer, from an economic standpoint, was too good for the church to turn down. The church people rationalized that they could not afford to rebuild the whole church anyway. The church was faced with the dilemma of choosing a church decor with traditional Chinese style fitted into a modern-style building or going along with the rest of the building modern-style all the way. The former choice would have led to a hybrid design. The latter choice won out. The result is an example of

contextualization, if contextualization pays attention to present realities rather than inherited cultural legacy. Some would argue that the Hong Kong context is modern urbanization anyway. How Christian an identity does the church have? The exterior gives a faint suggestion of a church. The Christian identity is to be realized in the interior of the church. If there are any indigenous elements at all, they will be found there too, though in a minimal way.

I would like to move on to consider the church as a physical structure in another kind of context. Space is so limited in Hong Kong that it is prohibitive to build a church on a separate plot of land. From the latter half of this century on, most of the churches rent or own a flat or several adjoining flats in a multi-storey building. Many of the newly formed churches are located in residential areas but even there are found high-density housing complexes.

The Sha-Kok-Chuen Missionary Alliance Church is in one of the newer housing development areas (lower-middle to middle income). The church is fortunate to have a small public lawn in front. This gives a breathing space in a high-density complex of high-rise apartment houses. The church knows how to make itself an inviting place for weary bodies and souls in a crowded environment to come in for repose. The lawn is kept neat and the door-way is swept clean, with the church door

wide open on Sunday morning. The church plays soft hymnal music to announce it is ready to begin worship. By the doorsteps and inside the hall-way persons with smiling faces are on hand to greet people. The sanctuary is simply decorated but neat and pleasant. It is a welcome place for worship indeed. This is a case of effective contextualization. It is not accidental that the church has been growing—so much so that a second and even a third congregation have been started in nearby areas.

2. Liturgy

The last example leads me right into the subject of liturgy. Most Chinese churches do not look upon worship as having form or shape. They may think that their worship service has substance, particularly substance in preaching, but then preaching is unrelated to a form of worship. Preaching, prayer, hymn singing should be full of spirit, but again these activities do not fall into a shape or form. If liturgy is worship with a form, most Chinese churches are non-liturgical. They equate liturgy with formalism. But worship that is formless or shapeless leads to nowhere and is incomplete.

Actually liturgy not only has form, but it must have substance as well, otherwise it is hollow worship. Substance is in the preaching, prayer, in the hymns, and in the rest of the worship service. Substance is certainly in

the Eucharist. However, the word "substance" may be misleading. Here it is not used to mean "hard substance", like a stone. The Chinese translation 實質, meaning "real quality", which I would use, is closer to what is meant. Another possible way to express the same thing in English is "spiritual reality". The Chinese approximation would be 靈性生命 ("spiritual life" or "life in the spirit"). Indeed spirit must be present in liturgy or any form of worship, and spirit is free-moving and spontaneous, like wind "blowing where it will." So when we use the word "liturgy", we speak of its form, substance and spirit, and they are all present in one piece at true worship.

The example of the church which shows welcome to the people who come to worship already has the spirit acting even before formal worship starts. In fact, we must not underestimate the significance of the spirit of hospitality in a worshipping community, right from the start, even before a worship service. That church in Sha-Kok-Chuen is successful in its contextualization work, i.e., making the most of its context to spiritual advantage. If I may express myself at this point in an inculturated way, let me borrow from what Confucious said when he was asked about ren (仁), "humanity" the cardinal Confucian virtue): "When going out of your door behave as though you were meeting an important guest; treat common people

as though you were officiating at an important sacrifice”(出門如見大賓，使民如承大祭). When “greeters” at the church door can have this kind of spirit in going out of the way to show hospitality to visitors and worshippers, the Holy Spirit is already at work even before public worship starts. In a liturgical church, formal worship is preceded by a procession of the officiants of the worship service and the choir members. There is nothing especially indigenous or otherwise about this, except to say that the Chinese people usually like to see a procession on a special occasion. My own inclination is to be in favour of a procession to lead to the worship service.

The liturgy formally begins with the call to worship, the invocation and the collect. If there is any room for comments in terms of indigenization in these opening parts, it is my plea for the use of dignified Chinese language instead of colloquial Cantonese or extemporaneous prayers. This is to start the worship service in the right tone. The liturgy is then followed by certain basic components: praise, confession, pardon, thanksgiving, affirmation, proclamation, offering, benediction. The order of these components may vary somewhat but there should be a sense of movement in the liturgical process.

Aside from the more liturgical churches, most Chinese congregations lack that sense of movement, but that is remiss of worship in its fullness. For example, after

praising God in God's holiness, it follows naturally that human recognize their imperfections or impurities and hence the need for confession; and after being pardoned it is but natural to return thanksgiving for divine grace. In moving from one component to another component, the right choice of music can enhance the spirit of worship. That is often neglected in the Chinese churches.

Under the heading of liturgy, I cannot leave out the Eucharist, which is really at the heart of it. Let me go back to my earlier comments on the Chinese translation for "substance." If "substance" is translated as 實體(hi-ti "real body") that would lend itself to the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation to explain the material change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. 實質(Shi-ji "real quality") leaves more room for a non-substance explanation of the presence of the elements in the Holy Communion. Shi-ji can mean "quality" yet quality can have material base and it can have a spiritual presence too. In speaking of the form, substance and spirit of liturgy, the use of the Chinese term 實質(Shi-ji) for "substance" can avoid the three-way division of form, substance and spirit in liturgy, in the Eucharist no less. To the non-liturgical churches I would emphasize the importance of form, and substance and spiritual reality to go with it. To the liturgical churches, I would emphasize the presence of

spirit in the form and substance (or life quality) of worship. Whether in the liturgical or non-liturgical churches worship services, it is the Spirit that animates culture, and, getting under the skin of cultural forms (e.g. medieval music or contemporary music, or indigenous music), it lifts them to the level of the sacred (e.g. sacred music whether as an ancient chant or a gospel song). This is the dynamics of "inculturation."

At this point, allow me to throw in another untouched issue for indigenization concerning the Holy Communion. Are Chinese churches under strict order to use wine and bread for communion? Actually, what order there is, is no longer strict. What wine? Grape wine, presumably. Yet some Protestant churches, inheriting an abstinence practice, use grape juice instead. What bread? Unleavened bread, according to the Passover tradition. However, at different places and in different times, various kinds of bread have been used. Nowadays thin wafers are served in many churches, Protestant as well as Catholic. What if some people do not have easy access to grape wine or grape juice, and what if they do not customarily take bread at meals? Can they adopt some other kind of wine or drink and some kind of cake or staple food in their indigenous as elements for Holy Communion? There is no ready-made answer to the question. A sensible approach

would walk in a balanced act between historical continuity (but there is no unbroken continuity) and indigenous adaptation (such adaptation is a long process of acculturation), but in the end the act of consecration is important of course. What is the act of consecration? It is not easy to explain. In briefest terms, it involves setting something apart as holy. But, to be meaningful, the elements that are set apart for consecration should come from the common life of the people, yet they must not remain identical with common and familiar objects. The words spoken by the priest and the conviction of the priest are essential in the act of consecration. But so is the attitude of the people participating. Above all, there must be the presence of the Spirit and everyone's openness to communion with the Spirit. Thereby what are originally and familiar become sacraments. The elements are originally familiar objects coming from the common life of the people, yet to mark their distinctness, setting-apartness, some sign of differentiation is helpful, like a cross on a Chinese porcelain cup (holding the wine or drink) and a specially made rice or wheat cake stamped with a Christian symbol, for example.

3. Music

The church traditions, both Western and Eastern, have

a treasury of musical resources for liturgical worship: e.g., the chants, anthems, "Kyries", "Sanctus", the "Gloria", etc. Do the churches of Asia have musical resources to offer too? They do. The Indian, Indonesian, Filipino, Chinese and other Asian churches have rich, indigenous musical traditions to draw from for use in Christian worship.

Hymns of Universal Praise (《普天頌讚》) first published in 1937, is an ecumenical Chinese hymnal of translated hymns (either words or music). In that hymnal, of some 500 entries, over 50 are of indigenous origin. In the revised edition of 1980, the number of indigenous hymns is increased to almost 100. The translation of the verses (of all the hymns) into Chinese (literate Chinese) is itself a highly significant accomplishment. The originally written Chinese verses are fine products. The Chinese musical parts are either taken over from folk or traditional tunes, which have Chinese features, naturally, and some are new compositions. I should say that these indigenous hymns do show the "local colour" of Chinese musical elements while they reveal the "true colour" of Christian beliefs.

Besides *Hymns of Universal Praise*, there are other Chinese hymnals, mostly collected within a denominational framework. As such, even though the words are translated into Chinese, the hymns retain the denominational ethos. Even the newly composed hymns (verses and music) are subject to the same constraint. There are exceptions, as some of the numbers

that are collected in the recent *Chinese Sacred Song* (《華人聖頌》), which aims at a wider overseas Chinese perimeter.

I would like to commend the new Lutheran Chinese Hymnal, which is used by the Chinese Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Hong Kong and elsewhere. Mabel Wu is one of the chief editors of the hymnal. The Chinese translations of the verses are very fine. There are newer additions of Chinese works too. Mabel's musical contributions are registered in this hymnal. What I appreciate is her creativity in the liturgical pieces for responses, prayers, amens, etc., which satisfactorily combine liturgical renewal features from the West (especially the Taizé community) and Chinese musical elements. The liturgy for the Eucharist she has been working on for the Lutheran Churches is an important contribution toward liturgical renewal. Her pieces for the "Gloria" and "Sanctus" transpose the usually melancholy mood of Chinese music into a spirit of joy and celebrations. The last time I observed, the Thanksgiving Prayer after the partaking of the elements is played down and hence the music is too subdued. If I am not mistaken, Mabel will work on that part more. Or has she already done it?

Speaking of Chinese hymnals, I must not leave out the *Hymns of Praise* (《讚美詩》) which is now used in the churches in mainland China. It is a notable product of the Church of

the post-denomination era. The Chinese hymns (1/5 of the whole collection) show fine local colours all right, but they seem to lack freshness. If my observation is true, this may be due to the Chinese churches' isolation from the rest of the world for too long. With more stimulation from the outside, including the Chinese Christian communities abroad, we can anticipate greater creativity in the future.

By the way, all the Chinese hymnals retain treasured music from the Church's long traditions, so that hymns from the West as well as Chinese hymns are sung. That is what it should be. All sacred music pieces are originally local products (whether from the West or from the East, from an ancient source or from a contemporary source), but they all add to the treasury of the Universal church.

One more consideration I would like to bring out, and that is, some of the Chinese churches, which are theologically conservative yet open to newer invasions like the charismatic movement, are taking to newer trends of music for worship coming from that movement. The newer trends of music (including guitar and electronic instruments) have a greater appeal to the youth than the older gospel hymns. What is interesting is that what may be foreign (English) verses are translated into Chinese (simple, even colloquial Chinese), and attempts are being made by the Chinese themselves to compose new verses and music. This may well be an area of

inculturation where new grounds are broken, yet the composers and writers are still groping for ground rules.

4. Language

Language, written as well as oral, is part of liturgy. Indigenization (or contextualization or inculturation) always involves the translation of language.

In the history of Christian mission in China, the classic case in point is the translation of divine names. The Catholic missionaries in the 16th and 17th centuries were caught in a bitter controversy, between the Jesuits on the one side and Dominicans and others on the other, over the translation of *Elohim* into *Shangdi* (上帝 "the Ruler above"), *Tian* (天 "Heaven"), or *Tianzhu* (天主 "the Lord of Heaven"). After several decades of dispute *Tianzhu* (the Lord of Heaven) became the only accepted name. Later on, in the 19th century, the Protestant missionaries were engaged in the same issue, particularly over the names *Shangdi* (Which was opted by one group over against *Tianzhu*, which the Catholics had already accepted) and *Shen* (Which was favoured by the Baptists and other independent church groups). To this day the nomenclature question has not been entirely settled. In the mean time, other names have come into use, like *Tianfu* (天父 "Heavenly Father") and *Shangzhu* (上主 "the Lord on High"). We cannot go into a historical review of the controversies tracing all the

intricate forces at work. I can only call attention to the serious implications of the use of a divine name for the worship life. *Shangdi* (the "Ruler above") easily brings to a worshiper's mind an anthropomorphic image, whereas *Shen* (a generic name, like god in the lower case) can refer to any deity or supernatural spirit of any form. An aborigine from Taiwan told me that the name in translation for the Holy Spirit is the same word for ghost (following the old name in English, Holy Ghost). He said that, that is a great hindrance to communicating a monotheistic faith in a community where polytheism and superstition are all around. Until a satisfactory linguistic and theological resolution of the nomenclature issue is found and even when found, the task of nurture and education is urgently needed. The importance of the task cannot be over-emphasized.

Attention is now drawn to the translation problem for another set of expressions used in Christian worship, like amen, hallelujah, hosanna, Immanuel, etc. These expressions date back to Christian antiquity, but in the Chinese language they are utterly foreign. On the whole, these terms are transliterated, adhering to the original phonetic sound as closely as possible. Occasionally an exclamatory expression is translated for its meaning. For example amen is translated as 誠心所願 (*cheng-xin-shuo-yuen*) ("May the heart's desire be realized"), which is

now fairly widely accepted in the Church of Christ in China. I leave it to the Chinese pastors and teachers to discuss what to do with these terms in the light of indigenization. During advent one Sunday after a church service a young man asked his woman companion who had apparently invited him to church, "What is this e-ma-ne-li (word-for-word literal meaning: "with-horse-inward-profit" for Emmanuel) that the congregation just sang?" She said, "I don't know for sure." They then walked back to me and asked me to explain.

5. Ending

Even as a worship service has beginning, it has ending. The ending is just as important as the beginning, and I am giving a separate heading to "ending" to round off my presentation, even as a proper ending rounds off a worship service meaningfully.

The ending of worship service includes the benediction, the "sending forth" and the recessional. There is nothing I need to add here in liturgical terms, but allow me to make a few remarks with regard to the contextualization process.

First, sending forth to the world is often overlooked in the conservative Chinese churches. The ministers and lay people are accustomed to a church-world dichotomy in their thinking. I recommend that this idea of sending the parishioners back to the world to witness and to serve should be taken seriously.

Next, I personally prefer to see a nice though low-key recessional leaving the church to the back of the sanctuary to signify the formal conclusion of the worship service if there is a sizeable choir. Bearing in mind the Chinese people's fondness for festivities, the recessional would leave a more lasting impression on the worshippers' minds.

Finally, when people are leaving the church I would like to see that this is the time for not only the pastor but the rest of the congregation to bid farewell to one another by using a time-honoured and wonderful expression like *ping-an* (平安 "peace"). The expression has a beautiful sound (Whether in Mandarin, Cantonese, Taiwanese, or Hakka) and rich meaning similar to "Shalom" in the Bible, and it lends itself easily to become a standard Christian greeting. If I am right, that is done in the churches in Korea (Korean Christians say *an-ning-a-say-eo* as they bow). I much prefer the people doing this to breaking up in the middle of the worship service and having the people going around to give one another the sign of peace. It's perfectly all right to introduce the sign of peace in to the Chinese context; it may well become an accepted Christian greeting but that can be done when people take leave of one another. The greeting can be done in the rotunda of the church if there is one, or on the church

door-steps, or even in the sanctuary when people are breaking up. I think that this can be a meaningful way, humanly and spiritually speaking, to round off the worship service.

Chapter 8

A Response to: Contextualization of Christian Faith Expressed in Worship Life

YANG Dong-long (楊東龍)

The Chinese Christian (Protestant) Association originally belonged to several tens of different denominations and organizations. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the church encountered new situations and new problems following the development of the Three Self Reform Movement and the influence of the leftist political line. For example, due to a contraction of the source of students and insufficient monies to run the schools, eleven seminaries in Eastern China were combined on November 1, 1952 to form the Jinling Union Theological Seminary, and three seminaries in Northern China were combined on April 19, 1953 to form the Yanjing Seminary.¹ With regard to the church, its ability to nurture itself was insufficient owing to the reduction in

the number of believers. Added to that was the fact that pastoral personnel were regarded as belonging to the exploiting class and were required to participate in labor and support themselves by their own toil. Numerous pastors changed professions and became engaged in industrial or agricultural production.² Additionally, denominational splits and divisions have had a negative impact in the history of the church. Moreover, the accusation of being a tool of imperialistic invasion split the unity of believers.³ Because of these things merger of churches and joint worship became imperative. In 1958, Chinese churches began joint worship and merging of churches (but in Guangzhou, the association did not implement joint worship). The believer could select any church for participation in church life based on his own circumstances.

After the church resumed activity in 1979, the church gradually recovered and opened church premises. Believers also participated in joint church worship without distinction between denominations. The increase of open church locations was not accompanied by a resumption of previous denominational activity or an emphasis on the special characteristics of different religious faiths or different liturgies. Therefore the church has entered what has been called a "post-denominational era".

With regard to issues of differences in the special characteristics of faiths and in religious liturgies, Chinese churches have indeed made much effort and have experienced mutual respect and mutual deference in order to ensure the solidarity of churches and the image of beneficial unity. For example, in the case of the worship liturgy, the special liturgical characteristics of churches of different denominations were frequently combined to produce a liturgy that everyone (within a certain region) could accept.

In areas where the denominational background was relatively unified, liturgical controversies were not very prominent. For example, in areas where the Tsung Tsin Mission was originally, the special characteristics of the Tsung Tsin Mission liturgy were maintained after the merger of churches. The same is true for the Baptists and the Presbyterians. However, where several churches with different denominational backgrounds were combined, mutual respect was extremely important. For example some churches have two kinds of baptismal ceremonies, dripping of water (sprinkling) and immersion. The believer can choose which one he wants. In some areas the pastor is required to conduct two kinds of baptismal ceremony. When ordaining pastors or elders the principle of "one pastor, two ceremonies" is reaffirmed and has even become

a condition of ordination. Apart from this, churches have done their best to satisfy the needs of believers with stronger liturgical characteristics and backgrounds. For example, special humility ceremonies (foot-washing ceremonies), bread breaking gatherings and Sabbath gatherings, etc. may be conducted. My view is that persons with faiths having different characteristics and different liturgical backgrounds can be satisfied in joint church worship. Moreover, because the denominational concept is becoming weaker daily, liturgical controversies are not an important issue in the development of the church. On the contrary, not a small number of churches are seeking renewal of church liturgy in the present system to better lead the brothers and sisters in the conduct of ministry and worship.

After resumption of church activity, the new generation of Christians who believe in the Lord basically do not have any traditional denominational concepts. They lack a detailed, deep knowledge of and evaluation of denominations. They do not have any denominational baggage, but neither have they had the abundant spiritual experience and perceptions from the church history carried by denominations. Therefore they must obtain good instruction so that they will be able to see the negative impact of denominationalism, and so they will also know

the positive role played by denominations in history and can draw lessons from all aspects, including church liturgy and liturgical renewal, when rebuilding China's churches.

Notes

¹ Xu, Rulei, "You are Indeed the Child of God-In Commemoration of the Thirty Year Anniversary of the Jinling Union Seminary", *The Jinling Scholar Reprints* No. 8, p. 2 (April 1988); Jiang Yizhen, "The Situation Experienced in the Yanjing Union Seminary Preparations", *Tian Feng* No. 365, p. 2 (May 11, 1953).

² *Tian Feng* No. 556, p. 10 (July 14, 1958).

³ *Tian Feng* No. 559, p. 15 (August 25, 1958).

Chapter 9

Liturgical Renewal Movement and the Renewal of the Church of Hong Kong Situation

Mabel WU (伍中恩)

The first Chinese Lutheran Liturgy was developed by the Norwegian Missionary Society in Hunan province in China around the year 1902. The first printed Liturgy in Chinese was issued in 1909, its contents was almost identical with the Norwegian Altar Book of 1889.

At the 1920, Lutheran Church of China Assembly, a "Chinese Lutheran Liturgy" was approved as a tentative liturgy. This liturgy was very similar to the NMS's Chinese Liturgy of 1909. In the following year many revisions were made. A book of liturgical music was published in 1920 and in 1924 a hymn book *Hymn of Praise* was published. Finally in 1933 the approved edition of the "Chinese Lutheran Liturgy" was published. This liturgy contained a long and short version with additional options which

reflected the different traditions in the various missions and churches in China at that time.

In 1948, because of the political change in China, the Lutheran Theological Seminary was moved to Hong Kong. Thousands and thousands of refugees from mainland China also flocked to Hong Kong. The Lutheran Church quickly established her mission of bringing the gospel to the refugees and gathering Christians who had fled China.

As the hymn book of 1924 and the Chinese Lutheran Liturgy were selling out a new hymn book and liturgy were urgently needed to meet the needs & demands of the growing Church in Hong Kong.

In 1955, the new hymn book *Hymn of Praise* was published; with the 1933 "Chinese Lutheran Liturgy". This liturgy had much linguistic improvement and its primary model was the 1889 Norwegian Altar Book. The long liturgy consisted of three musical settings, each expressing a different mood for the different liturgical seasons and the short liturgy is a simplified version of the long one.

From the 50's to 90's most congregations used this liturgy of 1933 as the official worship liturgy, but with very little understanding of its contents and theological and liturgical meaning. The same collect (prayer for the day), the same prayer of the church, the same liturgical music of "Lent" with its melancholy mood were used and sung

Sunday after Sunday. The important seasons of the church Advent, Epiphany & Lent were usually ignored. Sursum Corda, the Eucharistic prayer of thanksgiving and the singing of "Sanctus", were usually not included in the liturgy. Therefore worship become a very mechanical exercise without much variation and joy. As a result, the sermon became the most important and dominating part of the service. Most Chinese Christians thought of going to church as going to the "teaching room" rather than going to the "house of worship".

Unlike their refugee parents from China, the second generation of Christians in the church are more educated and their worship experiences are not just limited to the Lutheran context. With influence from the worship of Pentecostal groups and the charismatic movement, the cry for change of the liturgy is growing louder in the Lutheran churches. Some young pastors who have not had a strong understanding of the Lutheran liturgy have abandoned it for the more lively Pentecostal and charismatic worship style.

To meet the need of the church, the ELCHK Liturgical Revision Committee was formed in 1990. Its task is to revise the Sunday liturgy, Members of this committee include Lutheran theological professors and ELCHK pastors; each is given a part of the liturgy to study and

rewrite. In 1992, the "Guidelines for the Renewal of the Worship Service" was drafted by a member of the committee Dr. Pirkko Lehtio, and it was later amended by the committee.

THE GUIDELINES FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE WORSHIP SERVICE

1. Theological principles

A. The mystery of salvation is present

(1) Salvation in Christ is present and influences the life of the congregation through the worship.

(2) Jesus Christ continues the unity with his disciples he had on the earth in the worship.

(3) God's will is that all people will learn to know the truth and be saved. Basic participation in salvation is given in baptism.

(4) The worship service is a celebration of the baptized.

B. Mention of God and congregation in Word and Sacraments

(1) In the meeting of God and congregation, God speaks in Word and Sacraments, as the means of grace.

(2) The congregation responds to God in prayer, confession, praise, adoration, and with their offering.

(3) Worship is the place where God is present because it is the meeting point of God and congregation.

(4) Worship concerns the whole human being. This must include taking the five senses into consideration.

C. Worship and the first commandment

(1) God is such that He Himself is: holy, the Creator of all visible and invisible; He expects obedience and holiness from us. We cannot just manipulate Him.

(2) God is active and giving. He is not far away, angry, and niggardly.

D. God-centered worship

(1) It is most important to realize that what God wants to give us through worship may not be what we wish from it.

(2) The message of God's unmerited grace can be heard clearly when the gospel has been preached purely.

E. Faith and love as purpose of worship

(1) The purpose of God is to awake faith and love and preserve them.

(2) We are wholly corrupted, sinful and lost. But at the same time Jesus Christ has redeemed us from depravation, sin, and damnation.

(3) Love has two sides: we let God's will be done in our life and as a result, love means that everyone will be served.

(4) Through faith and love, worship joins people's eternal and earthly life.

(5) Faith and love unite congregation members with each other.

F. The publicness and openness of worship

(1) Worship is the celebration of the baptized. The Word and Holy Communion are the spiritual food for all the baptized.

(2) However, the invitation to salvation through baptism as well as the worship is open to all.

G. The mission of the congregation

(1) The dimensions of worship are witness, *diakonia* (Christian service) and pastoral care (healing, caring, comforting).

(2) By participating, confessing, praising and singing, the congregation is sharing her faith with each other and the world.

H. Prayer of congregation

(1) Worship is a great prayer which is a significant part of the priesthood of all believers.

(2) Prayer happens always in a historical situation. The congregation's thanks for God's gifts, and asks Him to help in their own needs and those of the surrounding world.

I. The pastor and congregation in worship

(1) Worship also happens as a dialogue between the pastor and the congregation.

(2) Worship is celebrating together.

(3) It requires communication and co-operation between the pastor and the congregation.

J. Freedom and dependence in worship

(1) In structure and realization of worship, there should be space for freedom. Worship can be very simple or very solemn.

(2) Freedom depends on faith and love. Therefore we need an order for worship.

K. The eschatological dimension of worship

(1) Worship has an eschatological dimension: the congregation is already now praising with the angels and

the saints.

(2) Worship reminds the congregation that they are pilgrims wandering toward the eternal kingdom of God.

2. Main principles of renewal

- A. Lutheran theological principles above are guidelines for renewal for worship.
- B. Ecumenical communication and co-operation demand some common principles for renewal.
- C. Balance of missiological and diaconical principles in worship.
- D. Balance of preaching and the other parts of liturgy.
- E. Prayer as the task of the congregation.
- F. The emphasis of the church year as the breath of the congregation according to the salvation history.
- G. Joy and thanksgiving as the basic tone of the worship.
- H. Before the renewal, education of the congregations is necessary for understanding the meaning and purpose of worship.
- I. Inculturation.
- J. Balance between fixed forms and variety of options, and between formality and spontaneity.
- K. Participation of the congregation is significant.

These guidelines were very helpful for the revision

of the liturgy, and gave clear direction to the Liturgical Revision Committee as they worked on the task. This group gather together once a month to discuss each part of the liturgy seriously, and always keeping the practical and cultural elements in mind. Local musicians Mabel WU & Haward WONG were invited to write new liturgical music for the new liturgy. Periodically ELCHK pastors and co-workers gathered together to celebrate the Eucharist, using the new liturgy as it was in the process of revision. Valuable comments were given by the co-workers and the ministerium. Finally in 1994 a trial out version was published. The main feature of the liturgy was that it had five main parts:-

a. Liturgy of Preparation.

1. Entrance Hymn.
2. Greeting.
3. Confession of Sin.
4. Kyrie.
5. Absolution.
6. Gloria or Hymn of Praise.
7. Sharing the Peace.
8. Prayer of the Day.

b. Liturgy of the Word.

1. O.T. & N.T.

2. Hymn of the Day.

3. Alleluia.

Gospel.

"We give thanks to God for the Gospel."

4. The Sermon.

c. Liturgy of Response.

1. Creed.

2. The Hymn of Response.

3. The Prayer of the Church.

4. Offering.

d. The Liturgy of the Holy Communion.

1. Hymn.

2. The Great Thanksgiving

Sursum Corda

Preface

Sanctus

3. The Institution.

Eucharistic Prayer.

Words of Institution.

The Lord's Prayer.

4. The Distribution.

The *Agnus Dei*.

Invitation.

5. The Thanksgiving Prayer.

e. The Liturgy of Commissioning.

1. Hallelujah.
2. Benediction.
3. The Words of Commissioning.
4. Closing Hymn.

When the newly revised liturgy came out, it was not well received. Pastors and Evangelists found it too complicated, and incomprehensible. A series of worships, are given to educate the choirs, the choir leaders, church pianists and organists, and others who wanted to learn.

In late 1994 the Hymn of Praise Revised Edition was published. The liturgy was not included in this Hymn book; because it was still under-going revision. However, three sets of liturgical music and many others liturgical pieces were included. The beauty of this hymn book is that it not only contained many traditional hymns but also included gospel songs, songs from Taize, rounds, etc., and above all 10% of the hymns were originally written in Chinese with Chinese tunes. Since the appearance of the new hymn book there has been new energy and enthusiasm in the worship of many of the congregations.

In 1996, Rev. Arne Redse, member of the ELCHK

Liturgy Revision Committee, who wrote the book, *Gathered Together in Jesus' Name*. This book was written to educate the Hong Kong Lutheran Church, to help it to understand its rich liturgical tradition, from the early church to the Reformation; and from the history of the Chinese Lutheran Liturgy from 1909 to 1933 until our present day. This is an important book for the liturgical renewal in Hong Kong.

A high point of our liturgical renewal came when the Lutheran World Federation Assembly was held in Hong Kong. The liturgical setting written by Mabel Wu was chosen for both the Opening Eucharist and the 50th Anniversary Sunday Eucharist which was attended by one thousand Lutherans from different parts of the world plus four thousand local Christians. The thanksgiving and joy generated by this worship has had a long lasting impact : -

- a. The local Christian were made aware that the Lutheran liturgy can be both Lutheran and ecumenical and it can be shared by many churches all over the world.
- b. The Lutheran liturgy can be local (local music, local musical instruments and local arts,)and it can be global (music from all over the world, a Danish choir, German brass and African drums).
- c. People become more awared that the sermon is not the most important part in the liturgy. Jesus Christ our Lord is present when the people of God gather; He is present

when His word is proclaimed and He is present in the sacraments. Therefore, we should not elevate only the sermon as important and ignore the other parts of the liturgy.

As of July 1st 1997, Hong Kong is officially under Chinese rule. It is becoming more and more important for our Chinese church to reach more deeply into our culture and draw from our own traditions to express our Christian faith in our Chinese context. In the past, our church was afraid to mix Christian worship with Chinese culture. During important Chinese festivals, like "Chinese New Year", "Ching Ming", "Mid-Autumn Festival" etc., the liturgy in the church remained the same. It was hard, for example for Chinese Christians to joyfully celebrate Chinese New Year when they went to church on Sunday, if the liturgy just totally ignored the joyful mood and festivities of "Chinese New Year".

With the help and insight of the LWF's studies on Worship & Culture and the two books they published; *worship and culture in Dialogue* and *Christian Worship: Unity in Cultural Diversity*, the Chinese Lutheran Church in Hong Kong is paying more serious attention to the cultural elements in worship. I am happy to see that this "Year of the Tiger" many Lutheran congregations decorated their churches with beautiful Chinese

calligraphy, with words of the "eight blessings" on red paper; Chinese flowers and tangerines, symbols of the Chinese new year, were placed inside the churches. The many dull looking churches were transformed into a festive and joyful "Houses of worship." In the liturgy, during the sign of peace, people were invited to greet each other the "Chinese New Year" ways; by wishing each other God's blessing. Prayers, sermons and hymns were all related to the New Year. One congregation also had Chinese liturgical dance during the offering. This creative inculturation in the worship certainly helped the Chinese people to experience Christ who reveals Himself in their own arts, music, gestures, symbols and language. And they can claim this liturgy as their own.

Liturgical Renewal is an ongoing process, one can never say the revision of the liturgy is finished. The ELCHK Revision Committee is still meeting once a month to discuss other rites, e.g. ordination, baptism, funeral & wedding. And we continue to educate through the Lutheran Theological Seminary and continue to conduct various workshops to help people to understand the meaning of liturgy. But the most important of all is how we can help our pastors and Christians to live a life of continual worship in the presence of God, joining Christ in His perpetual intercession for the world, and the angels in their

unceasing praise to God, receiving and reflecting the love of God in our lives in this world.

Chapter 10

A Response to:

*Liturgical Renewal Movement and the Renewal of
the Church of Hong Kong Situation*

Pilgrim W. K. LO (羅永光)

As the word implies, "renewal" means the elimination or change of old elements that are not appropriate or are even destructive and the adoption or development of appropriate and beneficial new elements. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong originally used a Lutheran liturgy prepared in the mainland in the early part of the 20th century. The experience with its use in Hong Kong from the 1950s to the 1990s has shown that the churches' recognition of the contents and theological significance of this liturgy has been very low. Some of the seasons of the church year were neglected. Worship became mechanical and lacked joy. The focus of the worship gradually became concentrated on the preaching of the Word. The church became a classroom. In recent years, the

rise of Hong Kong charismatic churches have become a challenge that must be faced. Voices within the church calling for reform to the worship liturgy are becoming greater. In 1990, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong established a Committee for Revision of the Liturgy. The objective is to review the old liturgy, which took the liturgy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway as its model, and to establish a new liturgy to satisfy the needs of the present-day church.

What does the church actually need with regard to the liturgy? Of the eleven main principles for the Revision Committee and Liturgical Renewal raised in the document, apart from an emphasis on principles to satisfy subjective needs such as "localization", "balancing form and spontaneity, regulation and change", "encouragement of believers to participate" and "helping believers to obtain joy", there are some objective theoretical principles. These include "unity", "balancing evangelism and service", an emphasis on the "church year" and "Lutheran theological principles". Additionally, the document raises eleven main points regarding theological principles. Though the special characteristics of Lutheran liturgy are not particularly emphasized and are not described or discussed, all theological areas of the liturgies of the traditional confession of faith are fully covered.

When reforming the liturgy of Lutheran churches today, it is necessary to refer to how the liturgy was reformed by Luther in his time.

1. Impartiality

Luther did not make an unqualified reformation of the liturgy of the Roman Church. He retained the elements necessary for the worship of God by the Christian church. Whether it was the public nature of worship, compilation of every kind of liturgy on the basis of the church year or the worship liturgy's Lord's Prayer, confession of faith, preaching of the Word or Holy Communion, etc., all of these demonstrate the kind of impartiality that does not depart from church tradition.

2. Denominational nature

Although Luther opposed setting up denominations, establishing a Church of Luther, nevertheless the criticisms that he urged against the mass became one of the characteristic features of the later Lutheran church. Among these the most noteworthy is the realization of "Christ (the gospel) as the center" and "the priesthood of the believer" in the worship liturgy.

3. Relevance

The German Mass that Luther compiled was, for that time, an innovative localization of the worship liturgy and reduced the cultural gap. Additionally, *Congregational Hymns*, which he also wrote and used, increased the believers' feeling of involvement during worship.

Simply put, the manner in which the church reforms the liturgy reflects the way in which the church wants to go. To maintain its place as part of the family of Christian churches, it is necessary to retain its impartiality. To maintain some of its emphases in belief and theology, its denominational nature must be stressed. To enable worship to meet the needs of believers and to aid believers to be truly able to worship in sincerity and in spirit, it is necessary to pay attention to its relevance.

The promotion of liturgical renewal is not an easy task. The document mentions that the Committee published a version for trial implementation in 1994, but the response was less than ideal. Both pastors and workers felt that it was too complicated. The Committee learned that liturgical renewal is not simply publishing a new liturgy and then you are finished. More important is to cause the fruit obtained through much effort to be accepted. In other words, introductory and promotional work had to be done. Therefore, besides coordination of theological instruction,

introduction work had to be done for church pastors and even work seminars have been conducted for choir and believer leaders. This mass base is necessary. But if coordination with church policies could be made, for example if there could be more strict training and requirements for the main person leading the worship, the results would be even better. Also, it is not only the items of the new liturgy that will enable acceptance, more important is the "liturgical quality." For example, preaching of the "living" Word. Perhaps we need to exert more efforts in this regard.

Chapter 11

Liturgical Renewal Movement and the Renewal of the Church: Other Chinese Churches in Taiwan

Thomas YU (俞繼斌)

I am very happy to be able to participate in this seminar. When I received the assigned topic I had to admit that I had much hesitation. My hesitation had to do with the following questions: "Was there such a thing as 'the liturgical renewal movement' in Taiwan for the past fifty years?" "Has there been any trace of church renewal which was resulted from the influence of the liturgical renewal movement?" The popping up of these two questions made me wonder whether I was given an unrealistic task which could hardly be supported with the minimal substance. Fortunately, I have only 15 minutes. And I hope I have something meaningful to share before I run out of time.

Was there any liturgical renewal movement in Taiwan? If there was, perhaps one could only find some

level or trace of such movement in the Catholic circle. As far as the Protestant circle is concerned, I am afraid there was very little sign of such happening. Then, how about the question of church renewal? Are there significant signs? Yes, there are. But most of them have to do with the charismatic, rather than liturgical renewal. Great majority of the pastors and congregations in Taiwan yearn for revival and renewal. However, they opt for the charismatic movement far more than the liturgical renewal.

As to why they embraced the charismatic, rather than liturgical renewal? I think the reasons are simple. First, most of the Lutheran pastors in the past routinely repeated the fixed Sunday liturgy week after week, and year after year without warmth, joy and zest. Instead of drawing the worshipping congregations into wonder and mystery of God's love in Jesus Christ, many pastors who led the worship in an unengaging way tended to create the impression that the liturgical worship was formal, dull and impersonal.

Secondly, the congregation was expected only to follow the liturgy passively, rather than to participate in a heart warming, faith affirming, and mission empowering way.

Thirdly, the congregations were rarely taught to appreciate the rich tradition and meanings of the liturgy.

Without a fundamental understanding of its richness, how can we expect the congregation to draw from it comfort and strength week in and week out?

Fourth, no matter how good a liturgy is in form and how rich in meanings, after a long period of time, due to the changes of language and circumstance, it requires revision or needs to create a new one to make the worship more relevant to the contemporary context.

Another important factor that contributed to the de-emphasis of the Lutheran liturgical worship has to do with the closure of the TLC-related seminary in Taichung, and the CELC-related one in Chiayi in the mid-sixties. The closure of the two seminaries meant that the instruction and study of the Lutheran liturgy had come to an end. As a result, four other Lutheran missions not related to the TLC and CELC established the former China Lutheran Seminary in 1966. Before the new co-operation in 1989, the style of worship in the CLS was more influenced by the Reformed and Free church tradition than by the Lutheran. The liturgical worship was then something alien to the community.

I could still vividly recall that five years ago when we first experimented the present communion liturgy I brought from the LTS in Hong Kong, it caused concerns among part of the student body. Although they tasted for

the first time the richness of the liturgical worship and the depth and joyousness of the Eucharist celebration, they had some uneasiness. Part of it had to do with the close connection of the Lutheran liturgy with the Catholic one. In spite of the initial uneasiness, the great majority of the community response was positive. We made it clear that the new liturgy was for experiment. When we learned and used it for a period of time, it could be accepted, or revised, or set aside.

We were so thankful that when we experimented the new liturgy, the revised edition of the *Hymns of Praise* was published in time. The combination of the two created a new atmosphere, and later a new spirituality in the CLS community. We may even say that the participation in the new liturgy and the solemn joy as well as the deep unity we experienced made the CLS emerged as a new community - a new community that finds its identity and mission in the meaningful worship of the Father in the Son through the Holy Spirit.

To return to the two questions we raised at the beginning of this report: Was there any liturgical renewal movement in the Lutheran churches in Taiwan? Has there been any trace of renewal resulted from such movement? Well, we have to say that there has not been any identifiable liturgical movement in Taiwan's Lutheran circle.

Though no such movement in formation, there is nevertheless a small spark of the liturgical renewal which continues to refresh and nurture the CLS community. The members of the CLS community finds a source of strength and joy, sense of identity and solidarity, assurance of hope and motivation for mission through the participation in the corporate liturgy. It is our prayer that this small yet bright spark of the liturgical renewal will keep burning and transforming our community - a community in worship and for mission.

As to whether it will someday become a movement in Taiwan, we can not foretell. One thing we do know: when we worship God in truth and Spirit, in love and joy, it will draw people to the throne of God's grace, and enable them to find life's deepest fulfillment in the true communion with God.

Chapter 12

Liturgical Renewal Movement and the Renewal of the Church: Biblical Perspective

CHOONG Chee-Pang (鍾志邦)

1. Definition

The *Oxford Encyclopaedic Dictionary* defines worship as "a. homage or reverence paid to a deity, especially in formal service. b. the acts, rites, or ceremonies of worship...", and liturgy as "a. a form of public worship. b. a set of formularies for this. c. public worship in accordance with prescribed form..."

This general understanding or impression of worship and liturgy, with its emphases on formal service, acts, rites, ceremonies, prescribed form, etc., is rather prevalent among Christians, and Chinese Christians in particular. This general understanding is not only limited in its scope, but also misleading in its perception. A biblically holistic perspective is therefore much needed.

2. Back to Biblical Roots

A. Liberation and Service

In the Bible the concept of service is inseparable from God's act of liberation or salvation. This point is clearly stated when the Lord God reveals himself to Moses as the liberator of an oppressed people:

*God said to Moses, "When you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain" (Exodus 3:12)

*The LORD said to Pharaoh, "Let my son (the oppressed people) go that he may serve me" (Exodus 4:23)

*The LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD... Let my people go, that they may serve me...'" (Exodus 9:1)

The meaning of the Hebrew word *'abad*, is simply to "serve": the oppressed are liberated (saved) so that they may serve God, their Liberator (Saviour). It is vitally important for us to go back to our biblical roots in order to truly understand the meaning of service in the context of our salvation. True service, rightly understood, goes far beyond formal rituals and ceremonies. Biblical worship is essentially a matter of "spirit and truth", and it transcends all places of worship (John 4:21-24).

B. Service, Identity and Mission

The liberated (saved) have now become God's people ("my people"). This is their new identity without which it is impossible to appreciate the magnitude and challenge of their mission as God's people: to be a light to the nations. (Exodus 19:5,6; Hosea 2:23; 1 Peter 2: 9,10; Isaiah 42:6; 49:6). The people of God in biblical times and throughout the history of the Christian Church have gone through many crises. But the most serious and basic of all is undoubtedly the crisis of identity, i.e., God's people have lost their true identity, their existence becomes unauthentic, and their service quite meaningless and their mission ultimately ineffective.

C. Service: A Constant Challenge and Choice

Christian service is dynamic and not static. It is always a great challenge. It requires a total commitment and a constant existential choice (Joshua 24:14, 15):

Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if you be unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for

me and my house, you will serve the LORD.

Christian service is thus a matter of great privilege and responsibility. Yet it must not be taken as a burden. Instead, it should be regarded as a great joy: "Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!" (Psalm 100:2)

D. The Meaning of *shachah*, "Worship"

Worship is not confined only to the "holy temple" (Psalm 5:7), but involving also "all the nations" (Psalm 86:9,10), even "all the earth" (Psalm 66:4):

*All the nations thou has made shall come
and bow down before thee, O Lord,
and shall glorify thy name.*

*For thou art great and doest wondrous things,
Thou alone art God. (Psalm 86 : 9,10)*

This biblical concept of worship not only liberates us from our own self-centredness and the compound mentality of the organized church, it also provides us with the much needed vision and incentive to think and attempt great things for God who is the Lord of all nations and the Creator of the universe. In the end, the whole world becomes our "mission field", and the environmental and

ecological issues our grave concerns.

E. The Meaning of *latreuo*, "Serve, Worship" and *latreia*, "Service, Worship"

Worship demands a conscious choice and commitment (Matt. 4:10). It involves the entire being of the Christian (Romans 12:1), including the renewal of the mind in relation to the world as well as God's will (Romans 12:2).

F. Love as the Motivation behind Christian Service and Worship

When one of the scribes came up and asked Jesus, "which commandment is the first of all?"

Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one, and you shall love the Lord with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31).

Christian service, whether to God or to our neighbour, will surely be burdensome when love is absent.

G. Ultimately, it is again a matter of identity and mission:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy

nation, God's won people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9,10).

Biblically speaking, it is not possible to be God's people and yet remain inactive in mission.

3. Two Vital Issues for Chinese Churches to Reflect and Study

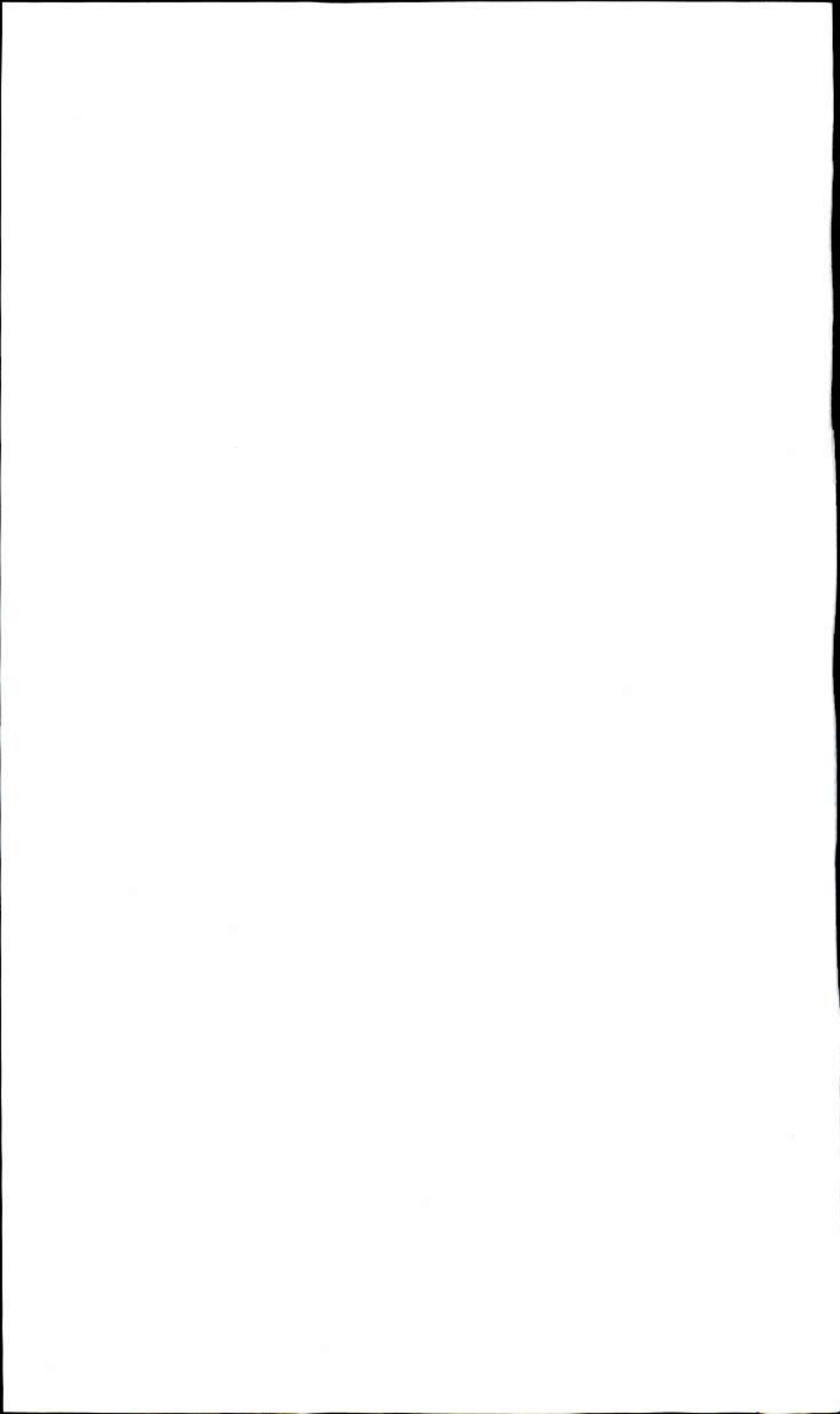
A. Understanding Service and Worship Incarnationally in the Total Context of Christian Identity and Mission.

Chinese churches in the mainland as well as in the diaspora have a relatively long pietistic tradition in which the Christian salvation is largely (sometimes even exclusively) understood as a personal experience. Consequently, Christian life and practice, including service and worship, are regarded primarily (again, sometimes even exclusively) as individual, private and "spiritual" matters. The personal aspect of the Christian salvation is certainly of utmost importance. But the historical reality of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus and the great vision that he has for us in his "high priestly prayer" in John 17

require us to take our Christian life and witness, including service and worship, incarnationally in the total context of Christian identity and mission. The effectiveness of the Christian witness in a rapidly changing and transforming Chinese society depends on the degree of seriousness that we give to our holistic approach to the whole matter.

B. Understanding Worship and Liturgy in the Total Context of the Christian Ministry of the Word and Sacraments: Understanding the Word Incarnationally and Cherishing the Sacraments as *Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans*.

For most Chinese Christians, the Christian ministry is primarily if not exclusively, a ministry of the word. As such, sacraments are often regarded rather satirically as mere rites and symbols. This lack of appreciation of the sacraments as *mysterium trmentum et fasinans* may be due to the influence of the "free church" mentality in the history of the Chinese church as well as the rationalistic and humanistic tradition of Confucianism in its long intellectual history. The word, instead of being understood verbally as the preached word only, must be regarded dynamically, wholly and incarnationally as the living word (the Dao) who has truly become flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).





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